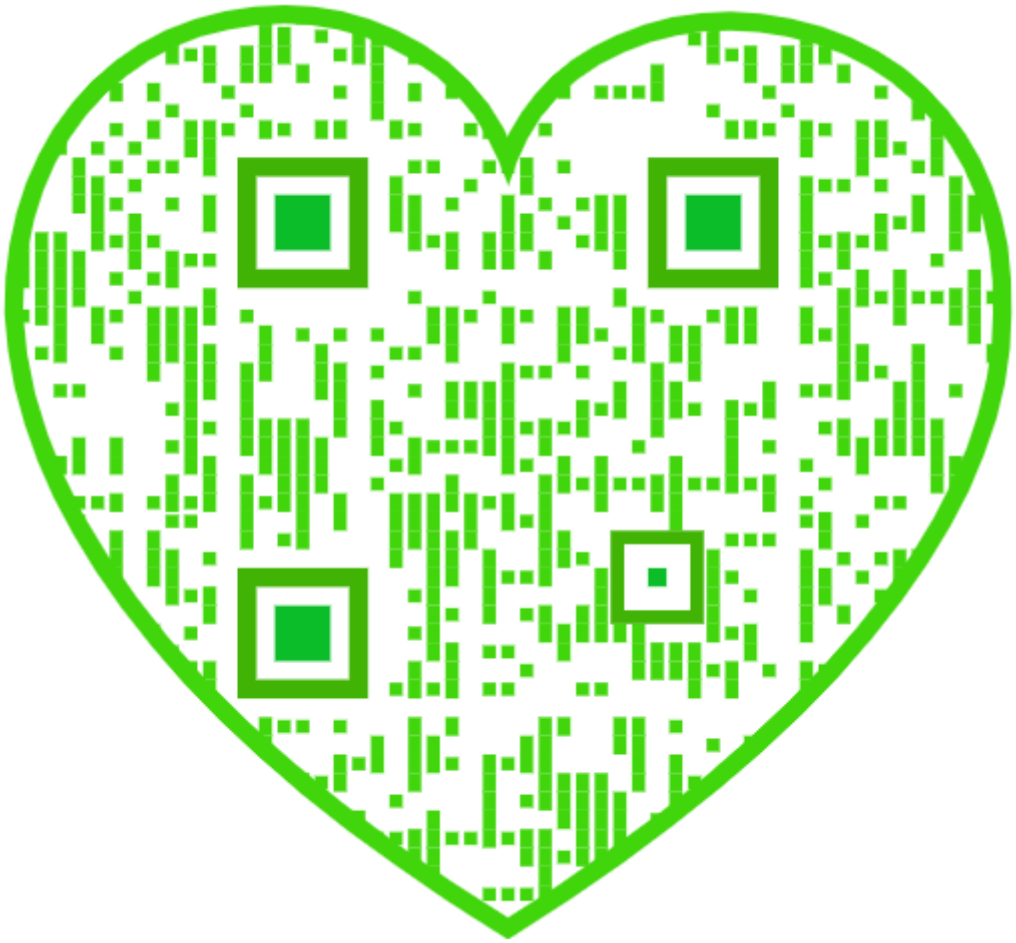

ENGLISH JOURNALISM,

AND

The Men who have Made it.

BY

CHARLES PEBODY.

CASSELL, PETTER, GALPIN & CO.:
LONDON, PARIS & NEW YORK.

1882.

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PREFACE.

THE history of English Journalism has yet to be written. It ought to be one of the most interesting works upon our library shelves, dealing, as it does, with the achievements of men who have in many cases been distinguished by eloquence, by high public spirit, and by some of the rarest civic virtues, as well as with the rise and growth of an institution which has in a few years placed itself on a level, as far as power and influence are concerned, with the old Estates of the Realm.

There are, of course, many works upon the Press —sketches of men, sketches of newspapers, anecdotes and reminiscences—some of them, like Mr. James Grant's well-known volumes, to which I am frequently indebted in the following pages, works of considerable interest. But history, in any adequate sense of the term, there is none; partly, perhaps, because the Press, as an institution, is of comparatively recent origin, and

partly because an historian, when he takes up his pen to sketch an institution, a career, or a campaign, prefers, if possible, to deal with accomplished facts—with that which is passed and gone, with men and events

> "Whose distant footsteps echo
> Through the corridors of time,"

or at all events with that which is complete in itself, instead of dealing with one of the living forces of the moment, where everything is controversy, criticism, chaos. Perspective constitutes one of the charms of history as well as of art.

You cannot very well write the history of an institution which, like the Newspaper Press, is almost day by day striking out fresh developments of its enterprise and power; which is superseding, or threatening to supersede, with its staff of special correspondents, the functions of our ambassadors; which is rivalling with its Forbeses, its Stanleys, its MacGahans, and O'Donovans the exploits of the Livingstones, the Vambèrys, and the Bakers whose books of travel are among the most delightful of our companions; and which, with all this, is arrogating to itself some of the chief functions of Parliament—most of its

functions of public criticism, most of its functions of debate, and many of its functions as a Constitutional check upon the conduct of Ministers.

Yet there never was an institution in the world that better deserved to have its history written than the Newspaper Press. For the history of the English Press is the history, if not of English liberty, of all those popular forces and political franchises which have given strength and solidity to English institutions; renewed the youth of the State; made England, with its ancient monarchical institutions, with its feudal relics, with its aristocracy, and with its Established Church, the freest State in the world; purified the public service; raised the tone of our public life; made bribery and corruption, in the old sense of the term, impossible; and welded together the whole British Empire, with all its races, all its religions, into a compact and powerful mass, which moves, when it moves at all, with a force, a unanimity, and a decision that constitute Public Opinion one of the marvels of our time.

I, of course, cannot attempt in the narrow compass of this volume to fill the conspicuous blank in our literature which will have, one of these days, to

be filled with a history of Journalism. But a series of publications like this would hardly be complete without a volume upon the Newspaper Press: without some account of its origin, of its development, of its present position, and of the men who have made it what it is, of the men by whom the Newspaper Press is still carried on—the special correspondents, the reporters, the contributors, the proprietors; and that is the purpose of the present work. The nature of the subject will perhaps justify me, if nothing else does, in expressing a hope that mine will not be the least interesting volume of the series.

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ENGLISH JOURNALISM.

CHAPTER I.

Fleet Street—The Newspaper Street of London—Its Associations—Shakespeare—Lovelace—Ben Jonson—Swift—Addison—Steele—The *Spectator*—Johnson and Boswell—The "Mitre"—The "Globe"—Goldsmith—The Kit-Kat—Milton—Richardson—Fielding—The Fleet Street Publishers—The Literature of Fleet Street—The Newspaper Offices—Fleet Street at Night.

FLEET STREET! What a host of recollections gather about this quarter of London! It is not a handsome street—hardly a picturesque street; but it is one of the busiest streets in London, and, in its associations, one of the most interesting.

It was a quarter once famous for its prison; it is now famous for its printing offices; and it is only as the newspaper quarter of the metropolis, I suppose, that nine people out of ten think of Fleet Street and its vicinity, unless, perhaps, they happen to recollect that it was in the old Fleet Prison that Captain Shandon wrote the prospectus of the original *Pall Mall Gazette*, "a journal written by gentlemen for gentlemen."

Yet no street in London is richer in memories than the cluster of coffee-houses, taverns, and printing offices which constitute Fleet Street. All its history, all its traditions, all its associations are of newspapers,

of newspaper men, and of authors. The shadow of Shakespeare still lingers in Shoe Lane. The genius and the sorrows of Lovelace, the most gallant and gifted of the cavaliers who crowded the Court of the Stuarts, ought to consecrate Gunpowder Alley in the eyes of every one who recollects his verses to Lucy Sacheverell, when leaving her for the French wars—

> "I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more;"

Or that exquisite song—

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage."

Apollo Court still preserves the memory of the famous Club-room, where Ben Jonson, "rare Ben Jonson," sang his songs and drank his sack and kept his bacchanalia,

> "And had his incense and his altars smoking."

You may still dine almost on the site of "The Devil," where Colley Cibber used to rehearse his Court odes; where Swift and Addison often dined with Dr. Garth, and sat up talking of Pope's "Homer" half the night; where the short-faced gentleman, in his periwig, sketched out with Sir Richard Steele, over a bottle of canary, the plan of the *Spectator*, and where they both determined to print themselves out, if possible, before they died.

The Fleet Street inns are rich in recollections of Sir Roger de Coverley, of Will Honeycomb, of Sir Andrew Freeport, and of the Templar who made

"the time of the play his hour of business." "The Mitre," by its name, at any rate, recalls associations of Johnson and Boswell. Most of the famous conversations took place at the old "Mitre" (pulled down half-a-century ago to enlarge Hoare's banking-house) over a bottle of port or madeira. It was there that the journey to the Hebrides was planned; and it was there, when the journey was over, that the hero and his bear-leader met to compare notes, and to chat over their exploits in the Highlands. "The Mitre" was one of the haunts of Pepys. His diary is full of allusions to it. "The Globe" is, or ought to be, haunted by memories of Goldsmith and his friends. It was the scene of many a rubber of whist, of many a dinner, of many a song, and of many a practical joke, in which the author of "The Traveller" bore a part.

The wits and statesmen of the Kit-Kat Club—Addison, Congreve, and Steele, Marlborough, Halifax, and Walpole—have been disinherited of the scene where they met to talk over the best means to keep out the Stuarts, and to secure the Protestant succession; to etch verses upon their club glasses in honour of the reigning beauties of the year; and to teach the golden youth of Queen Anne's day how

"To sleep away the days and drink away the nights."

But the spirit of the "Kit-Kat" still lives in Fleet Street; and if the men who now look down upon us from the canvas of Sir Godfrey Kneller could step out of their frames in their ruffles and lace, they would probably find themselves quite as much at home with the newspaper men of to-day as any of

the old *habitués* of Fleet Street. Men of letters as they were—distinguished in poetry, in eloquence, and in arms—the members of the Kit-Kat Club, "the best club that ever met," were, above all, men of the world, politicians and statesmen; and the journalists of the present day I take to be pre-eminently the representatives of these men of the world and of these literary politicians.

The publishers ought to mark every third house with a white stone. All Shakespeare's plays were published for the first time in Fleet Street, and it was through the enterprise of a Fleet Street publisher that they were brought into general circulation. It was a Fleet Street publisher who gave Milton £5 for "Paradise Lost." Dryden's "Virgil," his satires, poems, and fables, were all printed in Fleet Street; as were all Fielding's, all Richardson's, all Goldsmith's, all Johnson's works. Pope's "Homer," Swift's "Gulliver's Travels," Walton's "Angler," Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe"—all bore the *imprimatur* of a Fleet Street printer.

There are publishers and booksellers still to be found in Fleet Street. The relics of the race are still left. But they are only ghosts and relics. The publishers are now to be found on Ludgate Hill, in Paternoster Row, in the Strand, in Albemarle Street, in Waterloo Place, in Piccadilly. There are still one or two famous and flourishing houses to keep up the traditions of these bygone days; but in the main all the interest and associations of Fleet Street to-day centre in the newspaper offices.

All around you, as you walk down Fleet Street to-day, are newspaper offices. The *Daily News* appropriates Bouverie Street. The *Daily Telegraph* monopolises Peterborough Court. The *Standard*, with its stately pile of buildings, towers above everything else in Shoe Lane. The *Morning Advertiser* holds possession of one side of the street, and the *Daily Chronicle* of the other. The *Times'* office stands in gloomy isolation under the shadow of St. Paul's. It is almost the only morning newspaper that is published beyond the precincts of Fleet Street. The *St. James's Gazette* blushes unseen in the seclusion of Salisbury Square, where Richardson at the end of the day read the proofs of Sir Charles Grandison to a coterie of his friends over a dish of tea in the garden. The *Morning Star* used to be printed in Salisbury Square; *Lloyd's Newspaper* is still. But newspapers, as a rule, do not court the shade. It is not their fashion, if they blush at all, to blush unseen. They must live, if they are to live, in an atmosphere of publicity; and in Fleet Street you cannot turn either to the right or left without being challenged by a newspaper or a periodical of some kind. The place swarms with newspapers—religious newspapers, comic newspapers, sporting newspapers. There are newspaper offices in the cellars; there are newspaper offices in the garrets; and if there is a square foot of space to be found above the garrets, I should not be surprised to find a pale-faced correspondent writing against time and space for a Chicago or Cork newspaper.

A few of the newspapers still publish in the

Strand, or in the bye-streets which lie off the Strand—the *Morning Post*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Globe*, and the *Echo*—and that was the case originally with the *Daily Telegraph;* but the bulk of the London newspapers—all the most distinguished and powerful of them—are printed and published in Fleet Street, or within the area of those magic circles which were known in old times as White and Black Friars. The names of these Alsatias still live. Perhaps, to some extent, their spirit still lives, too, in the dingy streets and courts which even yet in many cases recall all too vividly Grub Street and the heroes of the "Dunciad."

These are associations that will never die, and perhaps it is not desirable that they should, for they give a flavour and a piquancy to Fleet Street which it might otherwise lack, and constitute part of its history quite as much as the pleasanter and nobler associations which link us with the days of Burke and Reynolds, of Gibbon and Junius, of Wilkes and Horne Tooke, of Rogers and Charles Lamb, of Dickens and Douglas Jerrold, of Leigh Hunt and of Cobbett, and that will link the recollections of the next generation with Delane, and with the most brilliant and distinguished of modern journalists—with William Howard Russell, with George Augustus Sala, with Edmund Yates, with Justin M'Carthy, with Edwin Arnold, and with Archibald Forbes.

CHAPTER II.

The History of Fleet Street: the History of the Press—The Centre of all International Telegraphs and Cables—Special Wires—Special Correspondents—Newspaper Enterprise—A Sub-Editor's Room—The Whispering Gallery of the World—The Editor and his Staff—At Work—The Newspaper Train.

THE history of Fleet Street is thus practically the history of the Newspaper Press, of its struggle for freedom, for independence, and for power; and Fleet Street to-day, with its energy, enterprise, and intelligence, is a characteristic representation of the whole spirit of the English Press.

It is, I believe, the only street in London that knows not what rest is.

You might almost fire off a cannon in any of the streets around the Royal Exchange after 7 or 8 o'clock in the evening without disturbing any one but the sentries on guard at the Bank, or a solitary housekeeper here and there. Most of these streets are a solitude after sunset. But that is not the case with Fleet Street. It is, indeed, only when all the rest of the business of the City is over and done, that the business of Fleet Street begins. You find no one but a few clerks, and perhaps a sub-editor, in the newspaper offices of Fleet Street in the day-time; but in the evening, when the bankers, brokers, and merchants of the City are smoking the pipe of peace, or playing quiet rubbers of whist, in their pleasant villas on the Thames, a fresh set of men appear upon the scene—quiet, thoughtful,

pallid men, with here and there one of rubicund visage; and all through the hours of the night, till 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, Fleet Street is one of the busiest spots in London—all life, all action, full of busy brains and busier hands.

All the telegraph wires in England, all the telegraph wires in Europe, all the submarine cables in the world, are brought together in Fleet Street; and when the wires and cables have completed their day's work with the mercantile men of the City, the newspaper men take possession of them, and we see the result of the night's work upon our breakfast tables with the tea and toast in the morning.

Telegrams from Tunis; telegrams from St. Petersburg; telegrams from Constantinople; telegrams from Calcutta, Lahore, or Simla; a speech of the Prime Minister's in Yorkshire, or a speech by the leader of the Opposition in Devonshire; the account of a strike in the Palatinate, or a criticism upon a new play produced in Paris; the prices of tea, tallow, cotton, corn, or hides at all the chief seats of commerce, from Pekin to Valparaiso or San Francisco: there is nothing too great and hardly anything too small for a newspaper to grapple with. It deals with equal freedom with a comet or a crisis. It discusses with the same frankness a fresh theory of the origin of creation, and a fresh play of Boucicault's or Dumas'.

A few years ago the *Times* was the only newspaper that kept special correspondents in the chief capitals of Europe, and even the *Times* made very slight use of the telegraph for the transmission of its news. Its

Paris correspondent sat down in his dressing-gown and slippers to write most of his letter before breakfast in order to catch the post, and the *Times*, by publishing his letter within twenty-four hours, was in this way generally a couple of days ahead of its contemporaries with French news. To-day there is no leading newspaper that does not possess a staff of correspondents in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, Constantinople, and St. Petersburg, and the bulk of their correspondence is transmitted to London day by day by telegraph, and transmitted in two or three cases by special wire. The London newspapers are all in Paris before the day is over, and we ourselves in London are often ahead of the Parisians themselves with their intelligence.

Nor is this all. The *Times*, the *Standard*, the *Daily News*, and the *Daily Telegraph* have their correspondents in New York, in Calcutta, at the Cape of Good Hope, in the ports of the Yellow River, in the capitals of those flourishing settlements at the Antipodes which are reproducing, under the southern cross, the life of English towns and villages; and wherever anything is taking place that is of the slightest interest to Englishmen—upon the banks of the Oxus, in the pahs of New Zealand, upon the Red River, in the valley of the Hawkesbury, in the valley of the Nile, or in the settlements which have grown up around the Cape of Storms—the principal newspapers are sure to have two or three correspondents specially told off from their staff to keep us posted up day by day with the march of armies or the developments of diplomacy.

All, or almost all, that these correspondents send is sent by telegraph, without the slightest consideration as to expense; and in this way we have upon our breakfast tables, by eight or nine o'clock in the morning, in terse and vivid forms, a complete synopsis of all that it concerns us to know of the state of the world—all that we want to know about armies, about the prospects of agriculture, about the markets, about the manœuvres of rival statesmen and ministers. The special correspondent has practically superseded the ambassador, and "the man in the street" with a special edition of his newspaper in his hand is often twenty minutes ahead with his intelligence of the Houses of Parliament, and even of the Minister in his cabinet.

The sub-editor's room of a newspaper-office is not, as a rule, a place to impress a stranger overmuch. It is a place of litter and confusion. But there are few more interesting spots in the world than those where, under the glare of half a dozen gas-lights, all the telegraph wires in the world are, as it were, gathered into a focus, and are whispering the transactions and secrets of the globe into the ears of the sub-editor and his assistants.

All through the still and silent hours of the night, when deep sleep falls upon man, the sub-editor and his assistants are listening to voices that are speaking to them from every point of the compass—to the eloquence of a Gladstone or a Bright, to the taunts and sneers of a sardonic leader of the Opposition, to the consultations of physicians gathered around the sick bed

of a President or a Kaiser who has been struck down by a pistol or the shell of an assassin, to the shouts of victory that echo from the field of battle, to the plaudits that signalise the appearance of a new star upon the operatic stage, or to the cry of distress that ever and anon sounds over land and sea from the crew and passengers of a steamer sinking off the coast of Newfoundland or of South Africa. The sub-editor's room is a sort of whispering gallery for the whole world, and, sitting in that room, you can lay your finger upon the pulse of the minister in his cabinet, or watch all the mysterious currents of trade and commerce which will be scanned the next morning with the deepest interest by every merchant who sends produce to English ports.

These telegrams, reports, and price lists constitute the raw material of the newspaper conductor. They have to be explained, to be illustrated, to be criticised, to be set out in their true bearings upon the course of events, to be weighed, to be measured, to be tested and scrutinised in a hundred ways; and this constitutes the most arduous and responsible task of the journalist.

The Newspaper Press is not without its faults. It is often partial—often partisan. It gives one man's speech, and it suppresses another. It is apt to assume everything against one set of men, and to assume everything in favour of another. It sometimes takes upon itself to deal off-hand with subjects which, to be properly dealt with, require more knowledge, more leisure, and clearer views than any public

writer can bring to bear upon any subject in a couple of hours at midnight. But newspapers make it a rule to have something to say every morning upon every topic or question of the slightest public interest: to say something even when there is nothing distinctly to the purpose to be said, except perhaps that of starting a conversation at breakfast, or in a club window; and considering the conditions under which newspapers are published, the clearness, steadiness, and sagacity that distinguish their views are in the highest degree creditable to the courage, intelligence, and conscientiousness of their conductors.

A great deal might be said of these conditions—of the rush of reporters with their copy from the Houses of Parliament, from the courts of law, from the theatres, from public meetings; of the constant patter of telegraph boys all through the night, with their showers of pink envelopes; of the rattle of machinery; of the glare of gas; of the busy scenes in the printing office; of the equally busy scene in the editor's room, where, in a ten minutes' conversation, or less, the policy of the paper has to be settled upon every point of the day; and of the way in which, in two or three hours, the leaders for the next day are dashed off by the fresh, keen, and thoughtful men who, with a pen in their hands and a printer's boy at their elbow, are prepared to say in a column of bourgeois all that can be said upon every question of the day, whether the question be one of politics, of science, of morality, or art.

There is no greater triumph of art in the present

day than the morning newspaper which is laid upon our breakfast-tables, day by day, all the year round, with the regularity of the sun and the seasons. It represents in a familiar form what can be done by capital and enterprise, by dash and daring, by calm and thoughtful intelligence; and, considering the conditions under which a daily newspaper is produced, the way in which news is gathered from every point of the compass, how it is set out, illustrated, and presented to the world in the course of a few hours, with all the light that previous experience, reading, observation, and talent can bring to bear upon it; and how, when the newspaper is printed, it is despatched in the course of three or four hours by special trains to every town in the kingdom—from Paddington to Penzance, from St. Pancras to Perth—the marvel is how well, day by day, the newspaper anticipates and expresses the opinions which men of slower perceptions or more deliberate judgment form over their coffee and cigars in the morning.

The Press errs, no doubt, now and then, but it is, on the whole, honest, independent, and able; and as long as that is the case, the English Press, with all its faults, must remain what it is at present—one of the ornaments of our public life, one of the surest guarantees for the purity of our public men, and one of the bulwarks of public liberty.

CHAPTER III.

Roman Newspapers—What they were—Their Contents—Viennese Newspapers—Origin of *Gazette*—Lord Burleigh and English Newspapers—The Armada—Newspapers in the British Museum—Forgeries—The *Weekly Newes* of 1622—The First Genuine Newspaper—Nathaniel Butter—News-writers—Who and What they Were—The Circulation of their Letters Superseded by Newspapers—What these Were—The Licensing Act—Suppression of Newspapers—The *London Gazette*—The *Intelligencer*—Its Editor.

THERE has been a good deal of controversy as to the origin of the Newspaper Press—whether it is the development of a Roman, of a Venetian, or of a Chinese idea, or whether it is the spontaneous growth of our own soil.

It is an idle controversy.

There could be no newspapers, in the sense in which we use the word, till the invention of printing; and till a few years ago the British Isles were the only spot in Europe where, if there was sufficient intelligence, there was sufficient public spirit on the part of the people to publish a newspaper.

The Romans had their *Acta Diurna*, and these *Acta Diurna* may have contained much of the matter which an English newspaper contains to-day—all the military and naval appointments of the day, all the victories of the imperial arms, a few notes upon the treasons, stratagems, and spoils that ruffled the

peace of the imperial Court, a few lines about the sacrifices of the Augurs, about the matches of gladiators, about the fall of an aerolite on the Palatine Hill, about the decrees of an Ædile or the freaks of a consul. Julius Cæsar is said to have ordered the acts of the Senate and the people to be published in the *Acta Diurna;* and there is a tradition that the journals were hung up in the galleries of his villa, in order that every one might know what was doing in Rome and the provinces.

The Republic of St. Mark possessed its newspapers, and if we did not borrow the idea of a newspaper from the Venetians, it is exceedingly probable that we borrowed many of the terms which are in familiar use to-day in connection with newspapers. Take the word *gazette.* That is clearly of Venetian origin. The Venetian newspapers were, like those of the Romans, in MS. They were hung up in galleries and public places in Venice, like the *Acta Diurna* upon the banks of the Tiber, and if you wished to read them you had to pay a *gazetta.* Hence the term *gazettes.* The newspapers took their name from the coin that was charged for reading them. There is another explanation, I believe—the explanation that *gazette* is derived from *gazzerótta*, a magpie. But I only mention that to put it aside. It is not etymology; it is satire. The word newspaper itself is neither Roman nor Venetian. It is, like the thing which it represents, emphatically English. But the word *gazette* still preserves the memory of the Republic of St. Mark and of the Notizie Scritte, in which, month

by month, the Council of Ten permitted the Venetians to know, upon authority, how the forces of the Republic were faring in their struggle against the Turks in Dalmatia.

These gazettes are said to have been published in Augsburg, in Vienna, and in most of the German towns; and this is so likely to have been the case that it would be preposterous to say they were not. But there are no specimens of Venetian, Viennese, or Augsburg newspapers of an earlier date than 1612; and almost concurrently with the appearance of these newspapers we have newspapers of our own.

Lord Burleigh has the credit of having published the first English newspaper; and the story, if not true, is one that Englishmen may perhaps be pardoned for believing to be true, because it connects the origin of the English newspaper press with one of the most picturesque and romantic incidents in English history —the preparations of the Spaniards for the invasion of England. It was necessary to put all England on the alert for the Armada, and Burleigh is said to have hit upon the idea of doing this by means of a newspaper. If that was the case, the English Press owes its origin to the year 1588, and to the first of that race of statesmen by profession who have done so much for English freedom and English greatness.

It is quite possible, of course, that Burleigh may have borrowed the idea from Venice, from Augsburg, or from Vienna. But those who adopt the theory of the Venetian origin of newspapers, are met at the outset with a difficulty. The first English newspaper was

not a *Gazette;* it was a *Mercury.* The interesting series of newspapers in the British Museum, which were for a long time supposed to represent the earliest English newspapers, are forgeries, transparent forgeries, which ought never to have imposed upon a single man of critical sagacity. But even forgeries, if they are to be sufficiently plausible to impose upon men of intelligence, must preserve some of the marks which distinguished the originals, and these newspaper forgeries in the British Museum may be accepted as proofs that the earliest English newspapers were not gazettes.

The *Weekly Newes* of 1622 is the earliest English newspaper that is above suspicion of any kind. This was the production of Nathaniel Butter; and if any single man is entitled to have his name associated with the English Press as its founder, that distinction belongs to the news-writer who first hit upon the idea of printing all the news of the day upon a single sheet, of publishing it regularly week by week upon fixed days, and of giving it a distinctive title. That is what Butter did, and did at a time when there was nothing that could with strictness be called a newspaper. There may have been many publications of various kinds in existence in Butter's time—publications which were hardly distinguishable from his, and hardly distinguishable from newspapers; but till Butter hit upon this device of printing the chief part of the news of the day—that is, of issuing a newspaper—the only means that existed for circulating intelligence was by means of the news-letters.

The aristocracy, living four or five months in the year in London, were anxious, when they were in the country, to know what was going on at Court, in the coffee-houses and theatres; and in order to keep themselves posted up in the gossip of London, they retained the services of a news-writer, who made it his business to collect all the chit-chat of the day, and to put it together in as presentable and pleasant a form as his skill would permit.

These news-writers were sometimes retired captains, sometimes printers, sometimes men who made this work a profession by itself. A peer kept his own special correspondent, and paid him a handsome salary—a good deal more than he paid his chaplain, and perhaps as much as he paid his falconer; but the general plan was for a bench of magistrates to club together for a letter, and this letter was read in the private room of the magistrates before they took their seat upon the bench to deal with poachers, shrews, and highwaymen.

There are very few of these letters now to be found; but Sir James Mackintosh, when preparing for his "History of England," took a good deal of trouble to find as many as possible, and his collection, if it showed nothing else, showed how eagerly these sort of letters were read, how they were handed about, how well, as far as the chit-chat of the capital was concerned, they filled the place which is filled by the society papers and London letters of to-day. It is clear from these specimens that, as Macaulay has put it, the news-writer rambled from coffee-room to coffee-room collect-

ing reports, squeezed himself into the Sessions House at the Old Bailey if there was an interesting trial, nay, perhaps obtained admission to the gallery of Whitehall, and noticed how the King and Duke looked. In this way he gathered materials for weekly epistles destined to enlighten some county town or some bench of rustic magistrates. Such were the sources from which the inhabitants of the largest provincial cities, and the body of the gentry and clergy, learned almost all that they knew of the history of their own time.

Nathaniel Butter was one of these news-writers, and apparently a very popular and busy one; for the demands upon his pen were so great that, instead of writing his letters, he hit upon the idea of collecting and arranging all the news of the day, printing it in a single sheet, and posting it into the country upon a fixed day of the week. That was the origin of the *Weekly Newes*. The *Weekly Newes* was a success. It reached a large circulation, and people who had till then had to trust to gossip, to a stray traveller, or to a glimpse now and then of a MS. letter, or of what was left of it after it had been well thumbed by a hundred hands, all at once found themselves on an equality with the best-informed people in the country.

But newspapers did not supersede news-letters all at once. Those who could afford to pay for a special letter from London continued to do so, looking down, of course, with scorn and contempt upon the crowd who were willing to share their news in common, as in the roadside inns they sometimes shared a bed.

News-letters continued to be written as late as the year 1712; but long before then the news-writers, in order to economise their own labour, had been in the habit of purchasing half-printed newspapers—that is, newspapers which, with a couple of pages of printed matter, left a couple of pages blank for the London correspondent to fill up with his own special gossip or suggestions.

I cannot say much for the contents of these newspapers. The poorest paper that is published in a county town to-day, with its police reports, its market reports, its selection of local news about the mayor or the borough reeve, about the county surveyor and the superintendent of police, is far superior in all respects to the *Weekly Newes* or the *Public Intelligencer* of the seventeenth century. The most sparkling paragraphs you find in them are paragraphs about mermaids in the Thames, or upon the Goodwin Sands, and the paper they are printed upon would not now be thought fit for a street ballad.

Out of London there was not a single newspaper, and even in London there were not many. They sprang up everywhere during the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth, but very few of them survived the Restoration. You could not publish a newspaper at all without the permission of the Star Chamber, and the Star Chamber was chary of granting permission. The Licensing Act expired in 1679, and the instant this expired the printers tried to make use of the freedom which they thought belonged to them as part of their birthright. The result was a blank dis-

appointment. "Any person," as Macaulay says, in his History, "might print, at his own risk, a history, a sermon, or a poem, without the previous approbation of any officer; but the judges were unanimously of opinion that this liberty did not extend to gazettes, and that, by the common law of England, no man, not authorised by the Crown, had a right to publish political news. While the Whig party was still formidable, the Government thought it expedient occasionally to connive at the open violation of this rule. During the great battle of the Exclusion Bill many newspapers were suffered to appear—the *Protestant Intelligence*, the *Current Intelligence*, the *Domestic Intelligence*, the *True News*, the *London Mercury*. None of these were published oftener than twice a week. None exceeded in size a single small leaf. The quantity of matter which one contained in a year was not more than is often found in two numbers of the *Times*. After the defeat of the Whigs, it was no longer necessary for the King to be sparing in the use of that which all his judges had pronounced to be his undoubted prerogative. At the close of his reign no newspaper was suffered to appear without his allowance, and his allowance was given exclusively to the *London Gazette*. The *London Gazette* came out only on Mondays and Thursdays. The contents generally were a royal proclamation, two or three Tory addresses, notices of two or three promotions, an account of a skirmish between the imperial troops and the Janissaries on the Danube, a description of a highwayman, an announcement of a grand cock-fight

between two persons of honour, and an advertisement offering a reward for a strayed dog. The whole made up two pages of moderate size. Whatever was communicated respecting matters of the highest moment was communicated in the most meagre and formal style. Sometimes, indeed, when the Government was disposed to gratify the public curiosity respecting an important transaction, a broadside was put forth giving fuller details than could be found in the *Gazette;* but neither the *Gazette* nor any supplementary broadside printed by authority ever contained any intelligence which it did not suit the purposes of the Court to publish. The most important Parliamentary debates, the most interesting events in our history, were passed over in profound silence," and it was only through the news-writers that people out of London heard even of the trial and acquittal of the seven bishops.

It is difficult, however, even with bit and bridle, to curb the spirit of a free people, and the Government, finding it impossible to put down newspapers altogether, thought it best, if newspapers must be published, to place them in the hands of men whom they could trust; and this explains the appearance in 1663 of the first newspaper that was worthy to be called a newspaper. I mean, of course, the *Intelligencer.*

The Editor of the *Intelligencer* was Sir Roger L'Estrange.

CHAPTER IV.

Sir Roger L'Estrange—The First Man who made his Mark on the Press—His Character as a Public Writer—His Conduct as Licenser of the Press—His Ancestry—A Cavalier—Offers to seize King's Lynn for Charles I.—Is Captured and Imprisoned—Escapes, and Crosses the Channel—Returns—Oliver's "Fiddler"—The Restoration—Suppression of Newspapers—Oliver's "Fiddler" Surveyor of the Printing Presses for Charles II.—Receives a Patent of Monopoly—The Journalist of the Restoration—First Journalist to Sit in the House of Commons—Knighted by James II.—Newspapers Supersede Tracts—The Revolution—L'Estrange Arrested—His End.

THERE were heroes before Agamemnon, and there were newspaper editors before Sir Roger L'Estrange. But till the appearance of Sir Roger L'Estrange, all the public writers whose names have come down to us are, like Ossian's heroes, shadows with the stars dimly shining through them. The characters of most of them are to be found in the old plays—in Ben Jonson, in Shirley, in Beaumont and Fletcher—but none of the sketches are flattering. There is nothing coarser or crueller in Aristophanes than the caricature of Nathaniel Butter in *The Staple of News* and *The Fair Maid of the Inn*. Marchmont Needham is said to have been the patriarch of the English Press, and perhaps strictly he is. Milton, Dryden, Andrew Marvel, and Defoe were all contributors to the Newspaper Press during the Commonwealth; and it is

notorious that during the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell the Press was freer than it was in the reign of either of the Stuarts. "I and my subjects perfectly well understand each other," said a Prussian ruler. "They say what they like; I do what I like." And that was apparently the case during the Commonwealth. The Protector did what he liked; the Press said what it liked. But Sir Roger L'Estrange, if not the first or most distinguished of English journalists, is the first man who has left his mark distinctly upon the English Press.

That mark is not an honourable one. Sir Roger L'Estrange was distinguished by many of the highest qualities of a newspaper conductor. He possessed every kind of courage. He knew how to use his rapier as well as his pen. He was a man of infinite resource, a man of sagacity and scholarship. He was master of a strong, racy, and taking style. He had a keen perception of humour. He never took more than one view of a subject, and he knew how to put the strong points of that view in a way to strike the public mind. But he had one grave fault: he was venal. He is said to have been the first English journalist who sold his pen as a soldier of fortune sold his sword; and as Licenser of the Press he was sterner and more tyrannical than those who put him in power.

Perhaps some of the darker lines in this sketch may be due to the fact that we know very little of Sir Roger L'Estrange except what we hear of him from his enemies. Sir Roger L'Estrange was a Tory.

His life has been written by Whigs, and generally by Whigs smarting from his castigations in the *Intelligencer*, in the *Observator*, or from his acts as Licenser of the Press. But Sir Roger L'Estrange, in his sword and ruffles, stands out conspicuously as the most distinguished public writer of the reigns of Charles II. and James II.; and if morally he was no better than the crowd of triflers and *roues* who were found in Whitehall, he is entitled at least to the credit of being, what very few of these men were, a brilliant scholar and a writer of pure and vigorous English.

His career in itself is not without interest. He was a cadet of an ancient and famous house. There have been very few reigns since those of the Edwards in which the L'Estranges have not borne arms or sat in the House of Commons; and in the early struggles of Charles I. and the Long Parliament, the L'Estranges took an active part. Roger L'Estrange, possessing the hot blood of his family, offered to seize the town of Lynn for the King, and raised a regiment in Norfolk for the purpose. But the Roundheads fell upon him before he was able to strike a blow, captured him, tried him by court-martial as a traitor, and ordered him to be shot. He was not shot; he was cast into prison, and kept there under his sentence for four years. But even this prolonged torture did not tame his spirit. He escaped, and the first use he made of his liberty was to try and raise an insurrection in Kent. The attempt failed, and Roger L'Estrange crossed the Channel to save his head. Here he lived as best he could for several years. But when the

Protector, in the plenitude of his power, offered a free pardon to the Royalists, Roger L'Estrange was one of the first to take advantage of the amnesty. He not only returned; he presented himself at the Court of the Protector, kissed his hand, and turned his skill with the bass-viol to account to conciliate the goodwill of Cromwell. His companions-in-arms sneered at him as "Oliver's fiddler;" but taunts of this kind never troubled L'Estrange. He thought it better to live as Oliver's fiddler than to starve as the page of a crownless king; and under Cromwell's protection Roger L'Estrange turned his pen to much better account than he had turned his sword under Charles.

The Restoration found Roger L'Estrange living by his pen and his wits; but no one was prompter or louder in welcoming the return of the royal exile than Oliver's fiddler, or, I may add, more resolute in his determination to turn the Restoration to his own account. The newspapers, with few exceptions, loudly denounced the Restoration, and the first, or almost the first, act of Charles II. was to suppress the newspapers. Oliver's fiddler was made Surveyor of the Imprimery and Printing Presses, and he soon vindicated his appointment. He suppressed all the newspapers that were at all hostile to the new order of things, and he received, in return, a royal patent granting him "the sole privilege of writing, printing, and publishing all narratives, advertisements, Mercuries, intelligencers, diurnals, and other books of public intelligence."

The *Intelligencer* was the first result of this patent.

It made its appearance on the 31st of August, 1663, and it set forth upon its title-page that it was published, by royal permission, for the satisfaction and information of the people—as a sort of contemptuous concession to the debased taste of the crowd for knowing the actions and counsels of those who condescended to govern them. The *Intelligencer* was continued till the publication of the *London Gazette* in 1665, and was afterwards replaced by the *Observator*.

Sir Roger L'Estrange was the journalist of the Restoration. He was the first English journalist to sit in the House of Commons, the first English journalist distinguished by the favour of the Crown, and the first English writer to make journalism a profession.

Nor is this all; for Sir Roger L'Estrange did much to make the Newspaper Press the institution that it is. Till his time, the discussion of public questions was carried on principally by means of tracts; and the presses of Oxford, Cambridge, and London teemed with publications of that kind in the discussion of Popery even in 1685. But the circulation of these tracts was contemptible in comparison with that of the *Intelligencer* and the *Observator*; and from the time of Sir Roger L'Estrange, the discussion of public questions has been carried on in the main in the Newspaper Press.

The Revolution, based as it was upon popular principles, was of the highest service to the Press; but it proved the ruin of Sir Roger L'Estrange. He was too proud, perhaps too old, to fall in with the humour of the day, and he was too powerful as a

writer to be left alone. The Whigs soon found an excuse for putting him under lock and key in his old quarters in Newgate; and, old, broken, and impoverished, he ended a long and turbulent career in poverty, proscription, and prison.

CHAPTER V.

The Revolution—What it Did and how it Affected the Press—The Liberty of the Press—How it was Secured—Sir Roger L'Estrange's Successor—Catalogue Fraser—His Foible—Licenses a Pamphlet on the Authorship of "Eikon Basilike"—A Popular Explosion—The Licenser Dismissed—Edmund Bohun Appointed—Refuses to License a "History of the Bloody Assize"—Sanctions a work on William and Mary as Conquerors—General Indignation—The Licenser ordered to Attend at the Bar of the House of Commons—Censured and Dismissed—The Censorship ceases.

We owe many things to the Revolution. It substituted an Act of Parliament for the theory of Divine right. It placed the rights of the people on a level with those of their rulers. It secured the Protestant religion, gave us a system of indirect taxation, brought the revenue and expenditure of the State under the control of the House of Commons, and, perhaps without intending it, conferred upon us a privilege which has in the long run produced greater changes in the English Constitution than all the

principles of the Revolution put together. It established the Freedom of the Press.

There is nothing about the liberty of the Press in the Bill of Rights or the Act of Settlement. The revolutionary chiefs never thought of the Press, and even if they had thought of it, it is not at all likely that they would have thought of stipulating for any special liberty for the Press in the way of criticism upon public men or public affairs. The Revolution was based upon popular principles; but the Revolution was the work of men who, aristocratic to the tips of their fingers, had no more intention of sharing with the whole population the privileges which they asserted for themselves, or of submitting their own conduct and policy to the free criticism of the public Press, than they had of sharing their estates with the people at large. Neither of these things was in the bond.

Almost the first thing that the Whigs did was to dismiss Sir Roger L'Estrange from the office of Licenser. But the office itself was not abolished. All the restrictions imposed upon the Press—all the pains and penalties, all the mutilations, all the cruel and ignominious punishments, the pillory, the stocks, the cartings and whippings—were still kept up.

"Earless on high stood unabashed Defoe,"

and where the author of "Robinson Crusoe" had to stand almost every contemporary of Defoe might have had to stand, if he had happened to advocate an unpopular cause with Defoe's courage and Defoe's candour.

But the Whigs, if they did not repeal the Licensing Law, put into Sir Roger L'Estrange's office a man of a very different temper from the editor of the *Observator:* a Scot, who, from his habit of attending book sales and treasuring auctioneers' catalogues, was known in all the coffee houses from St. Paul's to Charing Cross as Catalogue Fraser. You might publish anything under his sanction if, with your MS., you only put an "Elzevir" into your pocket as a present to the Licenser; and every one knew this. The Tories sneered at the Licenser's foible; the Whigs laughed at it; but both in turn made use of it for their own purposes, till one morning all the newspapers came out with the announcement of a new and startling work upon the authorship of the "Eikon Basilike."

No one in the present day thinks of tracing the hand of Charles I. in the "Eikon Basilike;" but in 1692 it was an article of faith with half the nation at least that the "Eikon Basilike" was the work of the martyred King, and the Licenser, without the slightest hesitation apparently, permitted this faith to be called in question by a critic in a cassock who held most of the superstitions of his cloth in contempt. The Tories denounced the book, denounced the author, and denounced the Licenser, and the Ministry, bowing to the storm, called upon him to resign.

"Catalogue" Fraser was replaced by one of those Tories who had taken the oaths to William and Mary, Edmund Bohun; and Bohun soon made the Whigs wish

that they had put up with Fraser, or that they had not been so hasty in dismissing L'Estrange. Bohun refused to give his *imprimatur* to a "History of the Bloody Assizes," or to a "Charge" of Lord Warrington's, because the "History" made martyrs and heroes of rebels, and because the "Charge" contained some contemptuous criticisms upon the theory of Divine right and passive obedience. But within six weeks of the day upon which he refused to allow these things to be published, he gave his sanction to the publication of a work which represented William and Mary as conquerors, and claimed the allegiance of Englishmen upon that ground.

This publication produced a greater storm than the criticism upon the "Eikon Basilike." The House of Commons ordered the Licenser to attend at the Bar of the House, and explain how he came to permit its publication, and the publication itself was ordered to be burned in Palace Yard by the common hangman. Milton had inveighed against the Censorship with incomparable eloquence and force, and inveighed in vain. But what Milton with all his eloquence could not do was brought about by the perversity and folly of Bohun in suppressing Lord Warrington's "Charge," and in publishing Blount's squib against William and Mary. The publication which led to this explosion was the work of Edward Blount, and is now known to have been a trick to turn popular indignation against the Licenser and the licensing system. It produced the effect it was intended to

produce—it turned the whole flood of public indignation against the licensing system and the Licenser. Bohun was dismissed, and the Censorship of the Press practically came to an end.

CHAPTER VI

The Age of Anne—First Daily Newspaper—The *Daily Courant*—What it was — In contrast with the *Spectator* and *Tatler*—Defoe and Political Journalism — His Career — Publishes a Review of the State of Affairs — The *Examiner* and the *Whig Examiner*—The Newspaper Tax—How it was Imposed —Its effect in Grub Street—All the Penny Papers Disappear—End of the *Spectator*—Sir R. Steele and the *Englishman*—Steele Expelled from the House of Commons.

THE age of Anne is the classic age of English literature. It was the age of Addison, of Swift, of Pope, of Prior, and of Steele. It was the age of the *Spectator* and of the *Tatler*. But it possesses another claim upon our notice which is generally overlooked. It produced the first daily newspaper that was published in this country—perhaps the first that was published in Europe.

This was the *Daily Courant*. It made its appearance on the 11th of March, 1702, three days after the accession of Queen Anne.

The *Daily Courant* was not a publication that can be compared with the *Times* or the *Standard* of to-day.

It was about the size of a single page of the *Spectator*, was printed only upon one side, and it contained on that side nothing more than a few scraps of intelligence, in which to-day it is difficult to find anything of special interest. Its literary value is nil. It was not a publication that will bear comparison for a moment with the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, the *Guardian*, or the *Freeholder;* but it is to us of far more interest, as the first sign of the Newspaper Press in a form which can be traced in the journals of the present day.

Neither the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, the *Guardian*, nor the *Freeholder* made the slightest attempt to deal with politics. The fashions, the foibles, and the follies of the day were their themes, and they dealt with these so freshly and piquantly, with so much wit and humour, and in such pure English, that they are read to-day as pictures of life and manners quite as much as they are read for their style.

We owe political journalism to Defoe, and Defoe paid the penalty of his courage with his ears. Nearly the whole of Defoe's reputation to-day rests upon his "Adventures of Robinson Crusoe." But "Robinson Crusoe" is only one of a couple of hundred publications which made Daniel Defoe one of the most conspicuous men in the reigns of William and Mary and of Anne.

Perhaps if Defoe had been as prudent as Addison and Prior, he might, like Addison and Prior, have risen to the rank of a Secretary of State or of a Minister Plenipotentiary; but Defoe was too hot-headed to consult either prudence or propriety, and

instead of sitting in the House of Commons and basking in the smiles of a Minister, he found that even in the Augustan age of English literature it was easier to find your way into a prison than a palace. "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters," turned out in the end to be the shortest way with Defoe into a cell in the Old Bailey. The House of Commons read his pamphlet, pronounced it to be a scandalous and seditious publication, and committed the author without more ado to gaol. That would have been enough to convince most men of the error of their ways. But Defoe was above trifles of this kind. From behind his bars he snapped his fingers at the House of Commons, and sat down there and then and planned a periodical publication which should discuss, in the face of the House of Commons, all the questions of policy and finance which the House of Commons held to belong exclusively to itself. Defoe called his periodical *A Review of the Affairs of State*. He published it at first only once a week; but finding the speculation profitable, he began to issue it three times a week —on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. This was the first attempt on the part of the Press to deal with questions of State policy, and it was a bold and successful attempt.

Defoe's *Review* is hardly to be found to-day outside the walls of the British Museum. Yet during the ten or eleven years of its existence this *Review* did more to guide and influence the opinion of the day than is done by any of the *Reviews* which have taken its place. Defoe's *Review* soon found a rival in the

Examiner. The *Examiner* was the organ of the High Tory party. Bolingbroke, Swift, Atterbury, and Prior all contributed to its pages, and their contributions were so pungent and keen that the Whigs thought it necessary to start a rival *Examiner*, the *Whig Examiner*, under the editorship of Addison. But their reign was short—very short. All these *Reviews* were killed by the imposition of the newspaper tax—the first of those taxes on knowledge all of which have been abolished in our own day.

This newspaper tax took the place of the Licenser, and it was soon found to be a great deal worse than the Licenser. It was possible to trick the Licenser; but the exciseman was like the old man of the sea. It was impossible to shake him off. All the printers and publishers protested, and protested so strenuously that the Bill at first was dropped. But it was passed in 1712, and the result was instantaneous and complete. It half ruined Grub Street, and it is plain, from the tone in which Swift gloats over the prospect, that that was the intention of the Ministry. They intended to extinguish and suppress, if possible, "all the little penny papers," and that is exactly what they did. "All Grub Street is dead and gone," says Swift, in one of his notes to Stella. "No more ghosts or murders now for love or money." Addison is pleasantly satirical over this "fall of the leaf;" but there is nothing like a tone of exultation in his remarks. He sighed with great complacency over the extinction of "those thin folios which have every other day related to us the history at

length of Europe for several years last past," and quietly doubled the price of the *Spectator*, thinking apparently that the *Spectator* was sufficiently buoyant, with its circulation of 3,000 copies, to weather the storm that swept away so many of its rivals. But even Addison had in the end to write "Finis" upon his page, and to bind up his thin folios into a volume for posterity, without the satisfaction of feeling that he had printed himself out, as he intended to do when, with Sir Richard Steele, he began the *Spectator* at a supper at "The Devil."

The pretext for this attack upon Grub Street and its publications was "that by seditious papers and factious rumours designing men had been able to sink credit," and that it was high time "to find and apply a remedy equal to the mischief." Neither of these charges applied to the *Spectator*. But Steele was not long before he came into collision with the Attorney-General under this Act, by printing articles in the *Englishman* and the *Crisis* which the House of Commons held to be "calculated to promote sedition," to be aspersions upon the character of her Majesty, and assaults upon the conduct of the Administration; and the House of Commons, promptly taking cognizance of his offence, expelled him without more ado from his seat in St. Stephen's, and congratulated itself that in expelling him it had put an end to sedition and criticism.

CHAPTER VII.

The Stamp Act—Printers Evade it—Unstamped Papers—The Press Assumes a Bolder Tone—The *London Post*—Publication of "Robinson Crusoe"—The *St. James's Chronicle*—Its Pictures of the Life of the Time—The *Craftsman*—Lord Bolingbroke a Contributor—Parliament and the Press—Parliamentary Reporting—Its Beginning—Cave and Dr. Johnson—How Reports were Concocted—Johnson Writing Pitt's Speeches in a Garret—Reporting a Breach of Privilege—Debates in Lilliput—Henry Fielding Starts a Newspaper—The *True Patriot*—How and why Published—The Use of the Press to Ministers—Smollett—The *Briton*—Lord Bute's Organ—The *North Briton*—Wilkes.

THE Stamp Act was to be in force for thirty-two years, and if its provisions could have been carried out in the spirit in which its authors intended that they should be, those thirty-two years would have been practically a blank in the history of the Newspaper Press, instead of forming, as they really do, one of its most interesting and eventful eras.

The printers found many ways of evading the Act, and the country was flooded with unstamped newspapers, which when not seditious were scandalous.

But, independently of publications of this kind, newspapers, which were distinguished by the boldness and freedom of their criticism upon public men, made their appearance under the auspices of leaders of the Opposition.

The *St. James's Chronicle* appeared in 1724, and was published three times a week. It still survives in the *Press and St. James's Chronicle*, a semi-political and semi-religious newspaper, standing in the old ways of Church and State with a steadiness and loyalty which are in striking contrast to the skittishness that marks most of its rivals. The *St. James's Chronicle* of to-day is neither sparkling nor scandalous; but in 1724 there was no livelier publication to be found in the coffee-houses of Fleet Street and the Strand. It was the great authority upon cock-fighting, upon skittle-playing, upon questions of etiquette and fashion; and if you wished to know all the talk of the town, all the marriages that were on the cards, with the age of the bridegroom and the dowry of the bride—all the intelligence, in fact, that we find in the *Whitehall Review*, in the *World*, or *Truth* of to-day—the *St. James's Chronicle* was the newspaper to read. The society journals, as they are called, of our own day are sufficiently free and familiar with those who are distinguished by their social position or their wealth; but the *St. James's Chronicle* was in its day quite as familiar, and frequently a good deal freer, in its social gossip and personal criticism.

The newspaper, however, which at this time made the greatest hit with the public was the *Craftsman*. It was started in 1726, in order to oppose the policy of Sir Robert Walpole. Lord Bolingbroke is said to have been a frequent contributor to its columns, and its circulation was a portent in those days. It frequently rose to 12,000, and it was hardly ever less

than 10,000 copies. The *Craftsman* confined itself almost exclusively to political criticism—it was the *Saturday Review* of the period; and its criticism explains its popularity. It was free, frank, and audaciously personal.

The whole character of the Press began about this time to change. The newspapers all grew bolder, freer, more direct and personal. The class of men who wrote in the newspapers changed also. Wits and statesmen, especially those who happened to be in Opposition, found that if they were to attack the Ministers with effect, they must do it through the Press, and this produced a complete change in the tone of the newspapers. Those who happened to have seats in Parliament could, of course, say what they had to say of the Minister and his policy to his face; but the doors of Parliament were closed against reporters, and the most brilliant speech, if spoken from the benches of the Opposition, produced no more effect upon the public mind than if it had been spoken from the top of Cader Idris. All that was heard of it out of doors was in the form of whispers, criticism, and gossip in the coffee-rooms of the Strand and St. Paul's Churchyard. The Minister met the invective of his critics with a laugh or a sneer, or, if they happened to be very exigent, with his majority; and the whip always knew how to eke out the arguments of his leader with a handful of bank notes. These were the days of Harley and St. John, and they constitute one of the most brilliant periods of Parliamentary eloquence. "The Tories," said Sunder-

land, with a sigh, "beat the Whigs hollow with their speaking;" and it was with the traditions of these encounters still fresh in his recollection that Pitt offered to give up all the books of Livy for the lost speeches of Bolingbroke. The influence of Bolingbroke's speeches, however, began and ended in the House of Commons; and the Opposition, beginning to realise the power of the Press, established the *Craftsman* and other publications of that kind. The discussion which was begun in the House of Commons was in this way carried into the newspapers, and through the newspapers the public began, bit by bit, to hear what was taking place in St. Stephen's—what was said, and what was done.

Till the year 1729 there were no such things as Parliamentary reports. But in 1729 the newspapers began to report the speeches of the Opposition, and the instant this was done, the Ministers and the Ministerial majority, instead of answering the speeches, began to protest against the reports as a breach of privilege.

These reports—read as we read them to-day, in contrast with reports which reproduce the whole scene, every word and every gesture of the principal speakers—are meagre and scrappy. But the best proof that, meagre and scrappy as the reports may be to us, they were sufficiently ample and accurate for the time, is to be found in the resolutions of the House of Commons and the House of Lords protesting against any and every kind of report. Sir Robert

Walpole had the sagacity to see that if Parliamentary proceedings were to be reported at all, they ought to be reported openly and fully. But that was not the general opinion. The general opinion was that the Press had no right to discuss political questions at all; that the mass of the people had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them; that it was a breach of privilege to publish any report of Parliamentary debates—a thing to be put down, because tending to make Members of Parliament answerable to their constituents when they ought to be answerable only to their own consciences. And this is still Constitutional theory, as distinguished from extra-Constitutional practice, for even to this day it is against the Standing Orders for any newspaper to publish a report of what is said or done within the walls of Parliament.

These Standing Orders have, of course, been practically obsolete for a couple of generations. They stand upon the Journals of the House of Commons to-day—

"Like rusty nails, in monumental mockery."

But they were never intended to be so at the time they were passed; and they were for many years such a terror to printers and publishers, that Cave, the founder of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and practically the originator of Parliamentary reporting, never thought of printing a word of what had been said in Parliament till the end of the session; and even then his reports were published in such vague and mysterious forms, and with so many blanks and innuendoes, that it requires

almost as much skill and sagacity to spell them out as it does to decipher the inscription upon Cleopatra's needle.

Cave's plan was to steal into the gallery with two or three friends, to listen with all the ears they had, and then, at the bar of a neighbouring public-house, over a tankard of ale, to put their recollections together, write out the speeches in the rough, and hand their notes over, with a little personal explanation, to a skilful writer, who, with a few hints of this kind, could reproduce a Parliamentary debate upon any of the questions of the day. This was for several years the work of Dr. Johnson; and his Parliamentary debates, written for the most part in a garret in Exeter Street, or behind a screen at St. John's Gate, are quoted to this day as specimens of the Parliamentary eloquence of the period.

Perhaps now and then a genuine speech found its way into the *Gentleman's Magazine*, partly through motives of vanity on the part of the speaker, and partly through higher motives—motives of public interest; but, with these exceptions, the speeches were mainly Dr. Johnson's, and the animating principle of Dr. Johnson in the preparation of these works of art was to take care that the Whig dogs did not have the best of the argument.

The *Gentleman's Magazine* had two or three rivals in this work of Parliamentary reporting; but the newspapers, as a rule, confined themselves to criticism. That was the case with Henry Fielding's newspaper—*The True Patriot*. *The True Patriot* was started at a

critical moment in English politics—when the Pretender was threatening the House of Hanover, when the camp fires of the Highland clans were to be seen in a long red line all along the Scottish Border, and when the Tories, although perplexed about the religion of the Pretender, were far more perplexed by the spectacle of a Protestant prince upon the throne who could not speak ten words of English; and it was started partly to defend the policy of Sir Robert Walpole, and partly to promote the interests of Henry Fielding. "Sir," said George the Second to Pitt, when signing the warrant for the execution of Admiral Byng, "you have taught me to look for the sense of my subjects in another place than in the House of Commons;" and it was of a good deal more importance to Walpole that the public opinion of the country should be with him when the air was thick with treason than it was that he should have a majority at his heels in the lobby, when three-fifths of that majority had to be bought and paid for in Bank notes or gold. Henry Fielding's newspaper did not last long—very few newspapers did at that time; but it lasted long enough to serve the purpose for which it was intended, and long enough to recommend the author of "Joseph Andrews" to the Minister for the first magisterial appointment that fell into his hands. The House of Commons could be managed: that was a mere matter of money; but a power was growing up outside the walls of Parliament which, if it was to be managed at all, could only be managed through the Press, and the greatest service that a

public writer could do the Minister was to start a newspaper, and to pour a volley of shot and shell day by day into the ranks of his opponents. Every Minister in turn recognised the value of this, even those who, like Bolingbroke, hated the Press in their hearts; and one of the first things that Lord Bute did when he had cleared the Cabinet of Pitt and Newcastle, and had replaced every Whig in the Administration with a Tory or a Scotchman, was to start a newspaper—*The Briton*—to explain and defend his acts to the public, independently of the explanations that it was necessary to give in Parliament.

The Briton had but one purpose—to back Bute against Pitt and the patriots. The favourite found the money, Smollett found the wit, and it was not the fault of Smollett or of Bute that *The Briton* did not succeed. *The Briton*, with all its boldness and brilliancy, was extinguished by the superior boldness and brilliancy of the *North Briton*, and John Wilkes was the ruin of Bute.

The Briton appeared on the 20th of May, 1762, and John Wilkes, picking up the first number in a coffee-house, gave expression to the feeling of the Opposition with his usual point and precision. "It seems," said Wilkes, "that Lord Bute, after having distributed among his adherents all the places under Government, is determined to monopolise the wit also. But I think we can be equal with him there;" and the *North Briton* was published to put this to the proof. It made its appearance on the 5th of June, 1762, a few days after *The Briton*, and the political history of

Lord Bute's Administration is the history of *The Briton* and its rival. These two papers for the next six months really represented the Ministry and the Opposition. It was a combat of wits—Wilkes, Earl Temple, Charles Churchill, and Pitt on one side, Smollett and the Court on the other. The *North Briton* carried off the palm. Its satire, its wit, its trenchant criticism, its audacious scurrility, carried everything before it; and in the end Lord Bute had to bow before the storm and retire.

But the *North Briton* has a history of its own, independently of its overthrow of the Bute Administration. It was the means of testing one of the most interesting questions of Constitutional law that had been raised since the question of ship-money—the use of general warrants—and upon that point also the *North Briton* achieved a memorable victory.

CHAPTER VIII.

The first Newspaper to Criticise a Royal Speech—No. 45 of the *North Briton*—How it Came to be Published—Temple, Pitt, and Wilkes with the Royal Speech—Their Criticism—Wilkes Publishes it—The Sensation it Produced—Wilkes and his Printers Arrested—How—Churchill Escapes—Wilkes in Court—Chief Justice Pratt pronounces against General Warrants—Excitement in the Country—What Wilkes and Temple did for English Liberty.

THE *North Briton* was the first newspaper to criticise a royal speech.

Wilkes, in starting the *North Briton*, had two objects in view: first to write down Lord Bute, and secondly to ascertain, as he put it, how far a man could publish libels upon public men without the risk of imprisonment; and when Lord Bute retired the *North Briton* ceased.

But Wilkes revived the *North Briton*, for the purpose of publishing a criticism upon Lord Bute's successor, Mr. Grenville, and it was this special and extraordinary edition that made the *North Briton* immortal. Wilkes, returning from Paris after the formation of the Grenville Ministry, called upon Lord Temple in Pall Mall. He found Pitt there, with the King's speech in his hand. The Prime Minister sat for one of Lord Temple's boroughs, and finding it necessary

to ask permission to keep his seat, he enclosed, as a compliment to his brother, a copy of the royal speech which was to be read the next day from the throne. Temple gave the copy to Pitt, and Pitt, with the proof in his hand, was standing upon Temple's hearth-rug, reading the speech, when Wilkes walked into the statesman's study. Pitt criticised the speech as he read it, and, when the conversation was over, Wilkes picked up a pen and reproduced all the points of Pitt and Temple's criticism, in the form of an article for the *North Briton*.

There is nothing in this article that calls for special notice to-day. It is partly rant and partly commonplace. "The King of England," said the *North Briton*, "is only the first magistrate of this country, but he is invested by the law with the whole executive power. He is, however, responsible to his people for the due execution of the royal functions, in the choice of Ministers, &c., equal with the meanest of his subjects in his particular duty;" and upon that assumption, a mere commonplace of Constitutional law to-day, the selection of Lord Bute's successor was criticised, and, in its turn, the speech from the throne came in for a few paragraphs of animadversion, as if it were, as Constitutionally it is, the speech of the Minister, instead of being, as in form it is, the personal speech of the King—his Majesty's speech in his Majesty's own words.

Till then a royal speech had never been criticised, and, even in Parliament itself, hardly any one had ventured to speak of it except in the most

respectful terms. People were therefore startled to find a newspaper challenging the explanations of the King in a speech from the Throne as if they were of no more account than the words of a Lord Mayor, to find the Minister taxed with hoodwinking the King, and to find the King taxed by implication, if not directly, with hoodwinking his subjects by statements which it was said to be hard to distinguish from falsehoods.

This article constituted the offensive part of No. 45 of the *North Briton*. It produced a profound sensation: it shocked Parliament; it astonished the country. The Court pronounced it a scandal; and the new Minister, thinking that, as Horace Walpole put it, he might, by a *coup d'eclat*, make up for his own absurd insignificance, at once arrested the printer, and ordered warrants to be issued against Wilkes and Churchill. The King's messenger had no difficulty in finding Wilkes; but Wilkes, with the cool audacity that never deserted him, asked to see the warrant before he surrendered. The messenger said it was against the authors, printers, and publishers of the *North Briton*, No. 45, and that his orders were to arrest Mr. Wilkes. Wilkes replied that the warrant did not respect him; that such a warrant was absolutely illegal and void in itself; that it was a ridiculous warrant against the whole English nation, and (says Wilkes, in his letter to the Duke of Grafton) "I asked why he would rather serve it on me than on the Lord Chancellor, or either of the Secretaries, or Lord Bute, or Lord Cork, my next-

door neighbour. The answer was, 'I am to arrest Mr. Wilkes.' About an hour after two other messengers arrived, and several of their assistants. While they were with me, Churchill came into the room. I had heard that their verbal orders were likewise to apprehend him; but I suspected they did not know his person, and, by presence of mind, I had the happiness of saving my friend. As soon as Mr. Churchill entered the room, I accosted him: 'Good morrow, Mr. Thomson. How does Mrs. Thomson to-day? Does she dine in the country?' Mr. Churchill thanked me; said she then waited for him; that he had only come for a moment to ask me how I did, and almost directly took his leave. He went home immediately, secured all his papers, and retired into the country" till the hue and cry was over, and then he coolly returned to London, and attended in the Court of Common Pleas to hear the arguments of his friend against the authority of general warrants, and to have the pleasure of hearing Chief Justice Pratt deliver the famous judgment which put an end for ever to the use of such warrants as that by which every one connected with the *North Briton*, from the editor to the printer's devils, was seized, with everything that could be found in their possession, upon the mere mandate of a Secretary of State. "To enter a man's house," said the Chief Justice, in words that still live among the noblest dicta of the Bench, "by virtue of a nameless warrant, in order to procure evidence, is worse than the Spanish Inquisition—a law under which no Englishman would wish to live an hour.

It is a daring public attack upon the liberty of the subject, and in violation of the 29th chapter of Magna Charta (*Nullus liber homo*, &c.), which is directly pointed against that arbitrary power." The editor of the *North Briton* was only in prison for six hours, and while there was treated with all possible courtesy and consideration; but such was the feeling of indignation in the public mind against this use of general warrants, that a special jury gave him £1,000 damages, when he brought an action against the Secretary of State who had countersigned the warrant for his arrest, and the portrait of the judge who ordered his release is still to be found in most of our town-halls as that of the patriot who vindicated one of the most precious principles of English law and English liberty.

Personally, Wilkes may have been quite unworthy of the popularity that his arrest brought him; but Wilkes, with all his vices, rendered a signal service to English liberty, and the *North Briton*, coarse and scurrilous as it may have been, vindicated the right of the English Press to canvass the acts and policy of our public men, even when in the highest positions, and vindicated with that the right of the Press to discuss, if need be, the utterances of the sovereign with as much freedom and frankness as it criticises the conduct of his servants.

Lord Temple is said to have been the first English statesman who led an Opposition in Parliament on purely Constitutional grounds, and it is not without interest as an historical coincidence that the

first newspaper article which extended the control of the Press over sovereigns and statesmen should have originated in a conversation in Lord Temple's study, and that the privileges of Parliament and the privileges of the Press should have been vindicated together, and vindicated indirectly, if not directly, by a peer of the realm.

CHAPTER IX.

Development of Parliamentary Reporting—Protests of Parliament—A Breach of Privilege—The Press Ignores the Standing Order—Parliament Acquiesces—Why—*The Public Advertiser*—Junius—His Letters—Sampson Woodfall—Burke on the Letter to the King—Efforts to discover Junius—Controversy about the Authorship—Glimpse of Junius—Sir Philip Francis and Lord Temple—Influence of Junius upon the Style of Newspaper Writing.

THE controversy about "No. 45," about the seizure of Wilkes's papers, about the authority of general warrants, about the expulsion of Wilkes from the House of Commons, and about the right of constituencies to return a representative of their own choice, extending as it did over several years, and involving the fate of men holding some of the highest positions in the State, created intense excitement in the public mind all through the country, called newspapers into existence by the dozen in

London and in all parts of the country, and brought out men as contributors to the Press who had till then never thought of handling a pen—men like Horne Tooke, Junius, and that vigorous and trenchant satirist whose sturdy figure in a blue coat with metal buttons, and a gold-laced hat and ruffles, was at the time one of the most characteristic figures in London —I mean Charles Churchill, the "flamen" Churchill, as Walpole calls him, who knocked down the foes of Britain with statues of the gods. These discussions did much to increase the power of the Press, much to make the Press a rival in influence to Parliament itself. But these discussions had another effect, and an effect which Parliament never anticipated from its proceedings. The Press, by taking a more independent course in public discussions, did much in its turn to create an interest in Parliamentary proceedings. The newspapers, concurrently with the publication of their own criticism upon public men and public questions, began to extend their reports of Parliamentary debates, and to bring themselves in consequence into collision with Lords and Commons. Parliament did all that it could to suppress the reports of its debates, and the Peers carried their opposition so far that they not only fined printers for reporting speeches, but fined them for publishing the name of a peer in a satirical paragraph. The printers at last threw themselves upon the protection of the City of London; and the House of Commons, finding it impossible to arrest a printer within the City boundaries unless the Speaker's warrant was countersigned

by the Lord Mayor, deemed it prudent to acquiesce in the violation of its Standing Orders, and to content itself with the reservation of a right to clear its galleries of strangers whenever the Press was found transgressing the respect due to Parliament, either by its reports, its criticism, or its caricature. "The best thing you can do with the Press," said one member, "is to let it alone. It may publish some very bad speeches; but it is impossible that it can publish very much worse speeches than some that are made in this House, and many of them are very much better." The advice was tendered in a cynical spirit, but it was not lacking in common sense, and the House of Commons has practically acted upon it ever since.

It was in the thick of the wrangles about the right of the Press to report Parliamentary debates, that the *Public Advertiser* published a letter upon the state of the Nation, by a writer whose signature apparently signalised a contribution from a fresh hand. The first of the letters of Junius appeared on the 21st of Jan., 1769, and it was written with a degree of boldness, freedom, and vigour which, except in the case of the *North Briton*, had never been surpassed. The picturesque energy with which the condition of the country was sketched, at once drew attention to the writer as a man who, apparently possessing special sources of information, possessed with these a dauntless spirit and a pen of unrivalled power. It needed no courage to write a letter of this kind—none at all; but it needed a good deal of courage to print it, because

the letter was a direct personal attack upon some of the most powerful men in the State. However, a man with the necessary courage was found in Sampson Woodfall, the printer of the *Public Advertiser*, the representative of a family of printers to whom the English Press owes a debt of gratitude equal at least to that which it owes to Junius. The *Public Advertiser* was at that time a newspaper of considerable note. It had a circulation of 75,000 copies a month, even before Junius had written a line in it, and that circulation was rapidly rising year by year. But at all risks and hazards the letter was printed, and letter after letter till the famous "Address to the King." It is plain, from Burke's speech in the House of Commons, that the letters of Junius had been a topic of talk, of criticism, and of speculation in Parliament and at Court long before this "Address to the King" called general attention to them; but it is a curious illustration of the indifference of the public even to the most brilliant and powerful writing till accident makes it too notorious to be overlooked, that even the letters of Junius had no perceptible effect upon the sale of the *Public Advertiser* till the printer found himself in the hands of the Attorney-General. Neither the first, nor the first dozen, nor the first two dozen letters of Junius did much to increase the sale of the *Public Advertiser*. But when, on the 19th of December, 1769, the letter to the King appeared, there was a run upon the paper, and (according to Mr. C. W. Dilke) 1,750 additional copies were printed to meet the demand. The effect of this Address was instantaneous and

complete. The Attorney-General instantly filed a criminal information against the printer, and the Ministry did all they could to ferret out the writer, intending, of course, to punish him with the printer, and to put an end once for all to these lightning flashes of spleen and satire. But it was to no purpose: Junius passed in and out of the clubs, in and out of the coffee-houses, in and out of Parliament, possibly in and out of Court itself, without the slightest recognition, and Burke, in the House of Commons itself, taunted the Ministers with their failure to arrest the mighty boar of the forest who made King, Lords, and Commons the sport of his fury.

There is hardly a man of the slightest note at that time to whom the letters of Junius have not been attributed; but all the speculation so far has only tended to prove the truth of Junius' own declaration: "I am the sole depository of my own secret, and it shall perish with me." The newspapers of the present day frequently publish contributions which in everything except their literary finish are equal to the letters of Junius; but in that respect the letters of Junius have never yet been surpassed, and probably never will be; because, in an age of hurry, people have neither the leisure to study style as Junius studied it, nor the time apparently to appreciate style as it was appreciated then. The spirit of Junius is a detestable spirit; but the spirit in which Junius wrote was the spirit in which all the public men of that day wrote and talked. It was not an age of chivalry in politics. Lord Mans-

field was afraid to look into the *Public Advertiser* at breakfast, lest he should find in it some new accusation which he could not passively submit to nor resent without discredit. The interest in Junius was so deep and so general, that the post-boys, as they rode into a town with the mails in their saddle-bags, used to shout: "A letter from Junius to-day!" and all who took in the *Public Advertiser* were at once besieged with visitors to see who was attacked—Lord North, Lord Mansfield, or the Duke of Grafton. Thus Junius, without the slightest assistance from a great name, from high rank, or distinguished position, attained a degree of power and authority such as had never till then been attained by any writer in the Press.

It was the fashion at that time for men of rank and fashion, Privy Councillors and Lords of the Bedchamber, to meet at the "Orange" or "Cocoa Tree," to sup together at little round tables in the middle of the room, and at these gatherings the letters of Junius were discussed over a devilled bone and a glass of punch with a good deal more zest and interest than the speeches of Lord North or the freaks of the Duke of Grafton. But even at the "Orange" and the "Cocoa Tree" no one seems to have had the slightest suspicion of the identity of Junius. There were plenty of nods and winks, plenty of suggestions, plenty of those insinuations in which presumption and ignorance love to deal, plenty of "Ah! I could an' I would's;" but the world knew no more then of Junius than it knows now, or than it is likely to know till the end of time. A tall gentleman, dressed in a light coat, with

bag and sword, was once seen to throw a letter of Junius's into Woodfall's printing office in Ivy Lane, and the description corresponded so closely with Richard Glover, a gentleman who used to walk every day in fine weather from St. James's Street to the City, that many of his contemporaries insisted, in default of a better man, that he *must* be Junius. But this is the only glimpse that we have ever had of Junius; and the public, unable to agree upon any one else, has long ago agreed to identify Junius with Sir Philip Francis. Sir Philip Francis, according to Burke, was the best pamphlet writer of the age, and a good many people, comprising some men of high distinction—Lord Macaulay and Lord Mahon to wit—think it not only possible but probable that Sir Philip Francis was Junius. It is possible, of course; all things are in this case. But the more the Franciscan theory is sifted, the more and more does it seem to become untenable, except upon the assumption, as Mr. Hayward puts it, that Sir Philip Francis was capable of systematically writing against every friend, benefactor, and patron he ever had, and of doing this without a rational motive or an intelligible cause. A dozen rivals have, upon one pretext or another, been set up against Burke and Francis; but there is, I believe, but one name that will stand for an hour in competition with these two—the name of Earl Temple.

The style of the letters is the style of Lord Temple. The policy of Junius is the policy of Lord Temple. All the predilections and all the animosities of Junius are those of Lord Temple. The hand-

writing of the letters is, as far as it is possible to trace it at all, the handwriting of Lady Temple, and where corrections or interlineations are made they are made by a hand which bears a close resemblance to Lord Temple's. Even the writing paper itself is the paper that Lord Temple had in use at the time. All these may, of course, be mere coincidences. But they are coincidences which raise a strong presumption against Lord Temple. And even this is not all. Lord Camden believed Lord Temple to be Junius; and the Grenvilles, openly avowing, as they did, that they knew the author, never once, one of them, ventured to deny that Lord Temple was Junius. All this may constitute no proof of the identity of Lord Temple with Junius; but it does, I think, raise a strong presumption that the "sett, bound in vellum, gilt, and lettered Junius I., II.," which Junius ordered, with "two setts in blue paper covers," as the only fee that he should ever think of requiring from Woodfall, found their way to Stowe; and if that be so, if Lord Temple was Junius, we have an additional reason for cherishing his memory, because in that case the first English statesman to organise a Parliamentary opposition upon Constitutional principles was the first public writer to set an example of that free and frank criticism, personal as well as political, which distinguishes the English Press.

All the letters of Junius were written within a period of about three years; but in those three years Junius, single-handed, wrought a greater revolution in English journalism than had been accomplished in the

three previous generations, infusing, as Mr. Wingrove Cooke, in his "History of Party," has well said, a spirit of daring independence into the conductors of political periodicals that had never before been equalled.

CHAPTER X.

Increase in the Commercial Value of Newspapers—Newspapers Appear Everywhere—The *Morning Chronicle*—The Press an Estate of the Realm—Parliamentary Reporting—Memory Reports—Woodfall and Coleridge—Perry forms a Staff of Parliamentary Reporters—Sketch of Perry—How he became Editor of the *Morning Chronicle*—How he made Journalism a Profession, and the *Morning Chronicle* a Power in the State.

THE *Public Advertiser*, if not the first English newspaper to be published upon commercial principles, was the first English newspaper that proved a commercial success.

All the newspapers that had been published till then were published to support or oppose the policy of this or that Minister, and the instant the purpose for which they were published was served, the newspaper and its staff vanished into thin air. This was the case with the *North Briton*, with the *Grub Street Journal*, and with the papers published by the authors of "Tom Jones" and "Roderick Random." But the public intelligence had grown so much under the

stimulating influence of this succession of journals, and especially under the *North Briton*, that newspapers, with their information and criticism, were all at once found to be a public necessity, and the *Public Advertiser* thus became, not only a necessity to the public life of the country, but a valuable property in itself. Its shares are said to have been sold by auction in the market, as the shares of the New River Company were sold; and to hold shares in the *Public Advertiser* was in itself a distinction.

Of course, as soon as this was discovered to be the case, speculators of all kinds made their appearance in the field, and newspapers sprang into existence everywhere—in Worcester, in Bristol, in Exeter, in Salisbury, in Newcastle-on-Tyne, in York, and Norwich. The letters of Junius placed the *Public Advertiser* at the head of the London Press. But the increasing interest of the public in Parliamentary debates brought powerful and enterprising rivals into the field, and the *Public Advertiser*, standing stoutly, or perhaps perversely, in the old ways, soon found itself distanced by the *Morning Chronicle*.

The *Morning Chronicle* began its career in a year which ought to be marked in the annals of journalism with a white stone—the year 1769. This was the year in which the first letter of Junius was published in the *Public Advertiser*, and the year, therefore, in which, through Junius, the English Press may be said to have set up its claim to rank as a rival of Parliament and an independent estate of the realm.

The Parliamentary reports in the *Public Advertiser*

were scrappy and unsatisfactory as compared with those which soon began to appear in the *Morning Chronicle*, and it was upon the strength of these Parliamentary reports that the proprietors of the *Morning Chronicle* tried to push their paper into circulation.

The reports were the work of a man who seems to have possessed a memory of marvellous compass and tenacity—William Woodfall. He could walk down to the House of Commons, with a hard-boiled egg in his pocket, take his seat in the gallery, sit out the longest debate, and then, returning to the printing office, sit down, and, without a single scrap of paper in the form of notes, write out fifteen or sixteen (small) columns of speeches! His reports perplexed Parliament and surprised the country, but they do not seem to have been of much practical service to the *Morning Chronicle*. They brought it plenty of compliments, but they never raised the circulation sufficiently high to pay the reporter for his trouble, or to pay the proprietors for their investment. They may have developed the taste of the public for Parliamentary debates, probably did, and in that case they did a good deal to lay the foundation for the after-prosperity of the *Morning Chronicle;* for the *Morning Chronicle* with its reports soon became what Lord Beaconsfield once called the *Times*, the classic authority upon all questions of Parliamentary reporting.

The risks that this system of single-handed reporting involved were shown by what happened to Coleridge. He was told off on one occasion to report a

debate in which Pitt intended to take part, and, in order to secure a seat in the gallery, he had to be at the doors of the House of Commons at seven o'clock in the morning, and, when the doors were opened, to spend several hours in the gallery before the debate began. The crowd, the long hours of waiting, and the debates which preceded Pitt's speech were too much for Coleridge, and before Pitt had been on his legs ten minutes the poet was fast asleep. He awoke in time to hear the cheers which signalised the success of the Minister's speech, but of the speech itself Coleridge did not hear ten words. A report, however, had to be written, and Coleridge, with the help of a few hints, did his best to produce a report. The speech was a brilliant success; but the report eclipsed the speech. All the world admired it, and till Canning happened to call at the office of the *Morning Post*, all the world supposed the report and the speech to be identical. Canning spoke of the speech as every one else spoke of it, with admiration; but he spoilt all his compliments in the end by the off-hand remark that the report did more credit to the reporter's head than to his memory.

Reports of this kind may, of course, have been very interesting as works of art; but when that was said all was said, and James Perry, recognising this, began his editorship of the *Morning Chronicle* by forming a staff of Parliamentary reporters, and by making arrangements with the door-keepers of the House of Commons for the admission of his reporters into the gallery in relays, in order. by a division of labour, to

publish the principal part of the debates the next day, and to publish them in an authentic form.

This was the foundation of our system of Parliamentary reporting, and the *Morning Chronicle*, possessing practically a monopoly of Parliamentary eloquence, soon became one of the most powerful and flourishing newspapers in the British Isles.

The public owe a debt of gratitude to James Perry. But English journalists owe him even more than the public. He may be said practically to have created the profession of journalism, and he was, personally, a fine specimen of an English journalist.

His career is not without a touch of romance. He was born at Aberdeen in 1756, and educated at Marischal College. But finding himself at eighteen or twenty years of age thrown upon his own resources, without a profession or an occupation, he crossed the Border, travelled as far as Manchester, and found employment as a clerk. Here in his leisure hours he anticipated the Edinburgh reviewers by cultivating literature on a little oatmeal. A year or two of counting-house work disgusted James Perry with invoices and ledgers, and he quitted Manchester for London. But it was some time before he could find an opening of any kind in London, and when at last he did find it, he found it apparently by accident. He was in the habit of scribbling verses and essays, and dropping them into the editors' boxes of Fleet Street and the Strand, and happening one morning to call upon the printers of the *General Advertiser*, he found them reading an article of his that had just been published.

He put the usual question—whether anything had turned up—and received the usual answer. "Nothing," said Mr. Urquhart, "nothing at all. But," added the printer, pointing to the article that he had been reading in the *Advertiser*, "if you could write an article like that we could give you immediate employment." Perry saw at a glance that the article was his own, and instantly produced another from his pocket. The publisher read the MS., stared at the hardy young Scot, and there and then engaged him as a contributor to the *General Advertiser*. This was the foundation of Perry's long and distinguished career upon the Press. He quickly rose to be editor of the *Gazetteer*, of the *European Magazine*, and, in the end, of the *Morning Chronicle*.

This was Perry's apotheosis. Old Bellamy, the housekeeper of St. Stephen's, found the money for the purchase of the *Morning Chronicle*, and it was through his friendship that Perry was able to pass his reporters in and out of the gallery when the reporters of every other paper found the door closed against them. Bellamy made a fortune by the way in which, when the House continued its sittings after the dinner hour, he put a chop or a steak upon the gridiron for hungry M.P.'s and served it upon a small table in the corner of the kitchen with a glass of port or sherry from the wood; and the story runs that Perry and his partner, in taking the *Morning Chronicle*, were obliged to take with it so much of Bellamy's old port that, from the time of the purchase in 1792 till the date of Perry's death in 1821, the

anniversary of the purchase never returned without finding enough of the original stock in the cellar to drink to the memory of Bellamy and his advance.

The *Morning Chronicle* soon grew into a flourishing property, with a circulation of 2,000 copies a day, and with a net revenue of £12,000 a year; and Perry, as the conductor of the *Chronicle*, held for many years one of the proudest positions that an English journalist could hold—that of the friend and confidant of the most distinguished of the Parliamentary leaders of his day. He is said to have written very little in the *Morning Chronicle* after it passed into his hands as proprietor. But if he did not write with his own hand, he knew how to select men who could write, how to keep his staff together, how to keep his paper in line with his party, and how to do this without forfeiting the confidence of the public or his own self-respect. It is not an easy thing for a man of spirit and independence at the head of a newspaper to stand well at once with the public and with his own party; but James Perry did, and the *Morning Chronicle* in his hands possessed a staff which comprised all the ablest men upon the Press—Mackintosh, Coleridge, Porson, Hazlitt, and "plain John Campbell," afterwards successively Attorney-General, Lord Chief Justice, and Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain.

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their while, upon mere party grounds, to cultivate
"The man who worked the *Times*" was no hermit—
no brooding cynic. Alexander Kinglake present
him to us as a man of fresh and vivacious intell
gence, florid, bright-eyed, beaming with zeal; a ma
of those qualities which, in speaking of wine, ar
called full-bodied and generous; a man of gre
ardour, great eagerness. And that is the testimon
of all who knew him.

There is a pleasant and characteristic sketch
"the man who worked the *Times*," in Trollope's stor
of "The Warden." Delane lived in his early days i
chambers, overlooking the Temple Gardens, wit
their green turf, their roses, and rhododendron
"He indulged in four rooms on the first floor, each
of which was furnished, if not with the splendour
with probably more than the comfort of Staffor
House. Every addition that science and art hav
lately made to the luxuries of modern life was to b
found there. The room in which he usually sat w
surrounded by book-shelves carefully filled; nor w
there a volume there which was not entitled to i
place in such a collection, both by its intrinsic wor
and exterior splendour." The chamber contain
but two works of art. The one, an admirable bust
Sir Robert Peel, by Power, and the other, a singular
long figure of a female devotee, by Millais, fa
equally plainly the school of art to which he w
addicted.

It was one of Mr. Delane's affectations—he ha
not many—never to speak of the *Times*, never to tal

versation about it, never to allow
mise in him the Editor of the *Times*,
of his, "The man who worked the
only one in which he coupled his
paper. But his genial nature (as
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ety was beyond measure interesting
ed eagerly for the actual state of the
ed generally to bend conversation in
o avoid coming into dispute with his
d liked best to reinforce what they said
n anecdote some fragments of that rare
ncerning men and their motives with
se daily the hearer of unnumbered
ie *Times*, he was always abundantly

the Editor of the *Times* in society—a
able man, full of life and chat, but the
the world to show the real eagerness of
n the weak, bustling way of people
nothing, whose time is of scarce any
eed, as Kinglake says, Delane had
rd composure, the air of power not yet
at becomes a strong man of action; but
uld be seen that his energies were rather
than lulled—that the furnace, if so one
had its fires 'banked up' in the day-time,
s always aglow, always ready to blaze into
iour or two before midnight;" and that
ne when John Delane put forth all those

CHAPTER XI.

The *Morning Post*—Parson Bate—A second Churchill—His Character—Becomes Editor of the *Morning Post*—His Conduct as Editor—His Duel with Captain Stoney—The Scene—His Skill as a Duellist—Increase of the Popularity of the *Morning Post*—Actions for Libel—The *Morning Post* is sold to Peter and Daniel Stuart—The Price—"The Finest-tempered of Editors"—Reorganisation of the Staff—A Brilliant Group—Lamb's Recollections of the *Morning Post*—Coleridge's.

THE *Morning Chronicle*, with its Parliamentary reports, with its prompt intelligence, with its dramatic criticism fresh from the pen of Hazlitt, carried everything before it, made the fortune of the proprietors, and became one of the pillars of the State. But the *Morning Chronicle*, popular as it was, did not long stand alone. It found a rival, a powerful rival, in the *Morning Post*.

The *Morning Post* originally made its appearance in 1772, but it was not till Parson Bate, "the gay and gallant Parson Bate," became editor in 1775, that it made a name for itself by its fresh and sparkling paragraphs of Court and fashionable gossip, and by its free and dashing comments upon the topics of the day. This "bruising parson" was a second Churchill —a man who, if he possessed none of the genius which sparkles in the "Rolliad," possessed all Churchill's

vices, his habits of dissipation, his contempt for his cloth, and his taste for town life. He held, like Churchill, a cure of souls in Essex. But Henry Bate, finding, like Churchill, that a man of wit, if he knew how to use a pistol as well as a pen, could push his way by means of literature better than he could in the Church by piety and learning, abandoned his Essex parish to a curate, and took up his quarters in London. Here he found employment upon the *Morning Post*, and contrived, before six weeks were over his head, to be called out for a criticism which was too free and frank even for those times, and his name, if not famous, became all at once sufficiently notorious to be the talk of the whole town.

"If you want to succeed," said a French cynic, "make enemies: your friends will soon rally round you." And that, apparently, was Henry Bate's rule. The tone of society was not at that time very high, but Parson Bate did not even attempt to live up to the standard of his time. He wrote plays; he spent his evenings in the play-house; he drank; he gambled; he ignored his cloth and all the obligations that it imposed upon him; but, like Churchill, he contrived to do all this with the air of a gentleman. He kept out of the pulpit, and as long as he did that people did not trouble themselves about the foibles of an Essex rector who had put a curate in charge of his parish, and who, with his adventures and his articles in the *Morning Post*, gave a fresh flavour to town life. But even the public opinion of that time drew the line at parsons duelling, and Henry

Bate, finding that he could do everything with impunity except accept a challenge, took the first opportunity that presented itself to show that he was equal to that.

The origin of Henry Bate's duel was the publication of a couple of offensive paragraphs in the *Morning Post* concerning a lady. Captain Stoney constituted himself the injured lady's champion, and called upon Mr. Bate, as editor of the *Morning Post*, to give him satisfaction. Mr. Bate ignored the challenge at first; but one day the two men met by accident at the Adelphi Tavern, in the Strand, and Captain Stoney then and there insisted upon receiving satisfaction. Mr. Bate's choice lay between a horsewhipping and a duel, and he chose the duel. The two men called for a room, shut the door, and, being furnished with pistols, fired at each other without effect. They then drew their swords, and continued the fight till the door was broken open by the police.

This was an accident, of course, that might have happened to any man—the duel was forced upon him. But the Rev. Henry Bate was a man who never measured his words either in conversation or writing, and, adopting journalism as a profession, he accepted all the responsibilities which the editorship of a newspaper involved. This was one of them, and no one ever called out Parson Bate without finding that he had to meet a man who possessed all the coolness and skill of a practised shot and swordsman. He was one of the first duellists as well as one of the most distinguished journalists of his day.

A man of this stamp and temper was at that period of the highest service to a newspaper, and under Henry Bate's editorship the *Morning Post* rose into general circulation. But a man of this kind must be taken with all the defects of his good qualities. One of Mr. Bate's defects was recklessness, and this recklessness landed the proprietors of the *Morning Post* in such a succession of actions for libel, that at last, when they found themselves mulct in £4,000 and costs for publishing a slander upon Lady Elizabeth Lambert, they thought it prudent to part with their editor, and soon after to sell the *Morning Post* itself to a couple of Scotchmen, Peter and Daniel Stuart, for a sum which, contemptible as it looks to-day, was, I suppose, all that the copyright and plant were worth at that time—£600.

Daniel Stuart is said to have been "one of the finest-tempered of editors—frank, plain, and English all over," and all that could be done by spirit and literary skill to re-establish the *Morning Post* in public estimation was done. Every man about town who knew how to use a pen was secured as a contributor—Sir James Mackintosh, Charles Lamb, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and two or three other men of their stamp. These men, together, formed a brilliant group; for Mackintosh had just won his spurs by his eloquent and vigorous reply to Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution," Charles Lamb was full of that "coy sprightliness" which gives so much charm to his writings, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, like Mackintosh, was in the full maturity of his unrivalled powers.

These men entered heart and soul into Stuart's plans to place the *Morning Post* in the front rank of the Newspaper Press, and the result was a striking proof of the power of fresh and vigorous writing when well kept up. Dan Stuart was at first his own editor, but after a year or two Coleridge was placed at the head of the political and literary staff, and the circulation of the *Morning Post* rose with such rapidity that in a couple of years it is said to have been 7,000 a day, and the profits between £5,000 and £6,000 a year.

There is a characteristic picture in Charles Lamb's "Recollections of Newspapers Thirty-five Years Ago" of the *Morning Post* and its offices, of its handsome apartments, of its rosewood desks, of its silver inkstands, and of its bluff and genial proprietor, and all Lamb's recollections of the *Morning Post*—the centre of loyalty and fashion—were of this kind. But Coleridge never seems to have thought of the *Morning Post* or of the Stuarts without bitterness and disgust—disgust at the work itself, in which, as he said, he wasted the pride and manhood of his intellect, without adding anything to his reputation; and aversion for Dan Stuart, whom he pictures to us rolling in his carriage through the streets of London, while the man by whose pen the *Morning Post* was made the flourishing property that it was—a source of wealth and power—was (metaphorically, I suppose,) starving in a garret.

The exasperation seems to have been mutual; for Stuart, although appreciating the rare gifts which distinguished Coleridge, complains of the difficulty of

getting him to sit down and produce on the spur of the moment a few observations on the current topics of the day, of his dilatoriness, of his relaxation of energy, and of the immense amount of preparation that he required even to write a paragraph. Stuart declares that he paid Coleridge his largest salary; but that may or may not imply much, for Charles Lamb's remuneration was sixpence a paragraph for wit and humour which was unrivalled for its point and piquancy!

CHAPTER XII.

The *Morning Herald*—Its Mission: to Defend Liberal Principles and the Prince of Wales—Mr. Bate's Reward: a Knighthood—Coleridge's Complaint of Neglect—Difference in the Whig and Tory Treatment of the Press—Anecdote of Lord Mansfield—His Prediction about Newspapers—The Press and Conservatives—Literary Associations of the Tory Party—Tory Writers—Liberal Writers—Liberal Journalists—Conservative Journalists—Contrast of Liberal and Conservative Policy—Its Results—Influence of Newspapers.

IT is like talking of the *Acta Diurna* of Rome, or of the *Gazettas* of the Queen of the Adriatic, to talk in the present day of the *Morning Herald*, of the *Courier*, of the *Constitutional*, of the *Sun*, and of the *Representative*; for, with the exception of the *Morning Post*, all the newspapers that flourished in the green and sallet days of the Press have been replaced by more adven-

turous rivals—by *Standards*, *Telegraphs*, or *Pall Mall Gazettes*. Yet each and all of these papers, the *Morning Herald* and the *Courier* conspicuously, played a distinguished part in the history of English journalism, and none of them can be ignored in a sketch of the Newspaper Press.

The *Morning Herald* owed its origin to the Rev. Henry Bate. The *Post*, standing as it did in the old ways of the Constitution, was too Conservative to suit the temper of Mr. Bate; and Mr. Bate, when he lost his appointment on that journal, started the *Morning Herald*, partly to uphold Liberal principles, and partly to defend the Prince of Wales. This was one of the duties that Mr. Bate took upon himself as an English journalist, and he defended the Prince so well that the editor of the *Morning Herald* became one of the most successful men of the day, the holder of three or four of the best livings in the Church, a magistrate in two or three counties, and Sir Henry Bate-Dudley.

Coleridge, the Editor of the *Morning Post*, complained that the Ministers who reaped the benefit of his services never recognised those services by anything more substantial than a compliment; and he did not stand alone. All, or almost all, the public writers of his day were neglected—all except the Rev. Henry Bate, and there were few men upon the Press at that time who cared to earn an estate or a knighthood by services which made the fortune of the Editor of the *Morning Herald*. Pitt, holding a position in the country where, with his eloquence, he thought himself

above criticism, took no notice either of the Press or of literary men; and Pitt's successor could not buy the Press either with gold or knighthoods. The Whigs, wiser than the Tories, cultivated the Press from the first, made use of it for attack and defence, and, as soon as the *Morning Chronicle* was worth cultivating, took care to be hand-in-glove with Perry—to give him information, hints, everything that a newspaper conductor wants—and to send him cards of invitation to their dinners and receptions. The Tories found funds for the *Anti-Jacobin* and for the *Sun;* but the Tories never treated the Press with anything like the frankness or cordiality of the Whigs. They ignored its services, even when those services were as conspicuous and brilliant as Coleridge's; and they were surprised, when power began to slip out of their hands, to find that, with the exception of Southey, every man who could write was writing on the side of the Whigs. The Tories never thought of cultivating the Press, till all the popular newspapers of the day were found to be on the side of their rivals, and till those rivals, with the help of the Press, were masters of the situation.

Lord Eldon relates a suggestive conversation which he heard, when a young man, at one of Lord Mansfield's levees. The Duke of Northumberland happened to drop in at the first of Lord Mansfield's Sunday evening levees that Lord Eldon attended, and His Grace was full of talk about Bath and its pleasures. "But," said his Grace, "there was one comfort I could not have. I like to read the newspapers at

breakfast, and at Bath the post does not come in till one o'clock. That was a drawback to my pleasure." "So," said Lord Mansfield, "your Grace likes the *comfort* of reading the newspapers—the comfort of reading newspapers! Mark my words. You and I shall not live to see it; but this young gentleman, Mr. Scott, may—or it may be a little later—but a little sooner or later those newspapers, if they go on as they do now, will most assuredly write the Dukes of Northumberland out of their titles and possessions, and the country out of its King. Mark my words; for this will happen."

It is more than a century since this prediction of Lord Mansfield's was spoken, and the Dukes of Northumberland still hold possession of Alnwick, and hold possession of it by as stout a title as they held it in the days of the Plantagenets. But the feeling of suspicion, of distrust, and of antipathy to the Press, which found expression in Lord Mansfield's predictions, animated the Tory party from the days of Pitt till the days of the Duke of Wellington, and, in a modified degree, from the days of the Duke of Wellington to the days of Lord Derby. I do not know that it is extinct even now. There is more than one sign in the Press of to-day that it is not.

The Tory party, rich as it is in eloquence, in military renown, in legal lore, is still richer in its literary associations. The Whigs claim two of the greatest literary statesmen of recent times—Burke and Macaulay. But, with the exception of Burke and Macaulay, almost every man who has been distin-

guished in literature as well as politics has been found in the ranks of the Tories. This was the case with Bolingbroke, with Swift, with Canning, with Disraeli, and with that Rupert of Debate who, after a long and active Parliamentary career, sat down in the shades of Knowsley to rob Mr. Gladstone of one of his laurels by translating the "Iliad." The Liberals claim two of the most distinguished of modern writers—Dickens and Thackeray; but against Dickens and Thackeray the Tories can set off all the chief writers of the older generation—Smollett, Johnson, Hume, Sir Walter Scott, Southey, Lockhart, Coleridge, Wordsworth, De Quincey, Gifford, and Christopher North. Sir Archibald Alison, Professor Aytoun, Theodore Hook, Praed, Lord Lytton, were one and all Tories. It was long a tradition of the Newspaper Press that Lord Beaconsfield was Editor of the *Representative*, and it is not denied even now that, if not editor, he was one of the contributors to the *Representative*. Lord Salisbury was for a good many years one of the most brilliant of the corps of writers who made the reputation of the *Saturday Review;* and even up to the time of his selection as one of the leaders of the Conservative party, the Marquis, if no longer a contributor to the *Saturday Review*, was a contributor to the *Quarterly Review*. It can hardly be said of Lord Salisbury, as it was said of Lord Beaconsfield, that he bears no escutcheon but literature; but Lord Salisbury, as Lord Beaconsfield was, is a "gentleman of the Press," and the old habits of the journalist, the old journalistic way of looking at public questions and of criticising public

men. even the old turns of expression, still distinguish his speeches, as they distinguished to the last the speeches of Lord Beaconsfield.

But where the Conservative party has produced a few journalists of note—a Coleridge, a Cecil, or a Hannay—the Liberal party has, on the whole, produced them in clusters and groups; and even in the ranks of the present Ministry two or three men are to be found who were distinguished as public writers before they were distinguished as Parliamentary orators or debaters. I refer to Sir William Harcourt, Sir Chas. Dilke, and Mr. Leonard Courtney. Lord Sherbrooke, as Mr. Robert Lowe, was for many years a constant contributor to the *Times*, and in the quiet rooms of Printing House Square fashioned and moulded that terse and epigrammatic style, glistening like the facets of a diamond, which, with its russet Saxon, has since given him one of the highest positions in the Parliamentary arena. It is not every political writer who can distinguish himself upon his legs in the House of Commons as he does with a pen in his hand among his books and busts. But if English journalism has not produced more than one Lowe or Harcourt, it has produced many men who have won a name as publicists and politicians—John Wilkes, Horne Tooke, Junius, Perry, Roebuck, Albany Fonblanque, Leigh Hunt, Douglas Jerrold. These were all journalists before they were politicians, and all of them, it may be added, were Liberal journalists.

The provinces contain some able and brilliant Conservative journalists; but in the provinces, as

in London, Liberal journalists outnumber the Conservatives by three or four to one, and outnumber them so conspicuously that it is difficult to suppose that the disproportion is due solely to natural causes. The Liberal party recognise literary ability wherever they find it—in London or in the provinces; Conservatives, as a rule, ignore it. There is hardly a Liberal journalist of the slightest note who is not upon the books of the Reform Club. But how many Conservative journalists are to be found upon the books of the Carlton? All through the provinces, Liberal journalists are to be found in the Commission of the Peace, in the Commissions of Lieutenancy, in the Town Councils. How many Conservative journalists are to be found upon the Bench, in Town Councils, in the House of Commons?

This difference in the policy of the two parties towards the Press has led to some curious results Perhaps the most striking result has been this—that the Liberal party possesses three papers where the Conservatives possess only one, so that, as far as the Press is concerned, the Liberal party is always ahead of the Conservative party. All the chief newspapers were for many years Liberal papers. The first daily newspaper published was a Liberal paper. The first penny newspaper published was a Liberal paper. The first quarterly review published bore the stamp of the Whigs, and the same was the case with the first weekly review, the *Examiner*. A Liberal newspaper was the first to publish Parliamentary reports. A Liberal newspaper was the

first to publish leading articles — the *Morning Chronicle*. A Liberal newspaper, the *Times*, was the first to organise a system of correspondence from the capitals of Europe, to establish a system of expresses all through the country for securing the reports of speeches delivered out of session in the provinces, the first to use steam-boats, the first to use special trains, the first to use the telegraph, the first to send special correspondents into the field of battle.

There was a time in the history of the *Morning Herald* when, for a season, a Conservative newspaper held its own against all the Newspaper Press of England, and surpassed even the *Times* in circulation, if not, perhaps, in political influence. But this was due to a quarrel between the proprietors, Messrs. Thwaites and Glassington, and not to the native energy or enterprise of the managers. Mr. Thwaites wished to throw over Mr. Glassington. Mr. Glassington refused to be thrown over, and in order to protect himself, threw the *Morning Herald* into chancery. Mr. Thwaites and his co-proprietors avenged themselves in a novel way. They met and passed a resolution ordering all the profits of the paper to be spent upon its development.

It was a curious freak, and it led to a curious result.

The corps of Parliamentary and law reporters was doubled. The staff of leader-writers was doubled. Their fees were doubled. Correspondents were established in all the leading capitals of Europe—in all

the chief towns of Great Britain. A system of expresses was organised, in order to facilitate the transmission of news. The object of all this was to reduce the profits of the *Morning Herald* to *nil*, and to compel Mr. Glassington to retire; but the result was to place the *Morning Herald* at the head of the Newspaper Press, to double its circulation, to increase its profits out of all proportion to the expenditure, and in the end to compel the proprietors, in sheer despair at their own prosperity, to settle their quarrel by selling the paper at three times the amount they could have sold it for before, to divide the money, and to retire from a business in which it was apparently impossible for them to ruin themselves.

This was the most brilliant, perhaps I ought to say the only brilliant, period in the life of the *Morning Herald*. But had the mode of management which led to this result been adopted as part of a system, instead of being adopted as a spurt, the *Morning Herald* might to-day have been standing at the head of the National Press, and the whole current of history might have been changed; for public opinion during the past forty or fifty years has been in the main what the Newspaper Press has made it, and the Press has been so overwhelmingly Liberal that, till a few years ago, when all the Press suddenly turned Tory, a Tory Government has been practically impossible.

CHAPTER XIII.

The *Times*—Its Origin—Its Principles—Stakes its Success on Character—Its Independence and Public Spirit—John Walter—His Character—A new Idea in Printing—Logographic Printing—A Failure—Why—Origin of Leading Articles—Due to the *Morning Chronicle*—The *Times* Appropriates the Idea—Its Original Staff of Writers—Peter Fraser—How he Wrote his Articles—John Sterling—His First Contributions to the *Times*—The City Editor—Thomas Alsager—Henry Crabb Robinson—Foreign Editor—W. Combe—A Prisoner in the King's Bench—*Times'* Dinner parties—Dr. Croly.

ALL the newspapers that can be said to have been distinguished in any way till the appearance of the *Times* were distinguished by some freak of cleverness, either by Parliamentary reports reproduced by some marvellous effort of memory, as in the case of the *Morning Chronicle*, by police reports which anticipated the "Sketches by Boz," as in the case of the *Morning Herald*, by personal satire, personal gossip, or pungent criticism upon the foibles of the day, as in the case of the *Morning Post*, or, as in the case of the *Courier*, by a bold and systematic assault upon all the forms and principles of English Government. The *Times* took up a line of its own from the first day of its existence. The proprietors staked their fortunes upon the general character of their paper, upon the promptitude and accuracy of its intelligence, upon its policy, upon the

frank and independent spirit of its comments on public men; and the principles that distinguished the *Times* in its early days from its contemporaries distinguish it still, although, perhaps, they can no longer be said to distinguish it in the pre-eminent degree that they did in the days of Pitt, and Addington, and Castlereagh.

The chief proprietor of the *Times* was John Walter—a man who knew nothing or next to nothing of newspaper work, but who knew precisely what the public wanted in a newspaper, and possessed, with this instinct and intelligence, the determination and enterprise which constitute the character of a successful man of business. He saw how a newspaper ought to be conducted, and he thought he saw how, by the development of a new idea in printing, he could produce the *Times* a good deal cheaper than any of its contemporaries.

The whole English language, according to Mr. Walter, consisted of about 90,000 words; but by separating the particles and omitting the obsolete words, technical terms, and common terminations, Mr. Walter believed it to be possible to reduce the stock in common use to about 50,000, and a large proportion of these words, with all the common terminations, he proposed to have cast separately, so that the compositor, with a slip of MS. before him to set in type, might pick up words or even phrases instead of picking up one by one every letter of every word in his copy, and thus, of course, save a good deal of time. The idea was impracticable, utterly impracticable, because the number of words required to carry out

the system must in itself be so great that no case of type that a printer could stand before would hold them all, even if the printer could "learn his boxes" with a case of some 4,000 or 5,000 compartments before him; but it took a good many years, a good many experiments, and the expenditure of some thousands of pounds to convince Mr. Walter that the failure was not due to the perversity of his printers but to the practical difficulties which surrounded his conception.

John Walter was far more successful in the general conduct of the *Times* as a newspaper than he was in the management of the *Times'* printing office. He set all the printers in London by the ears with his whim about logographic printing. But he had a very clear conception of what a national newspaper ought to be, and with the assistance of a miscellaneous group of men, who, as they are sketched for us by Henry Crabb Robinson, were apparently far more picturesque than practical, John Walter made the *Times* what the *Times* has been for nearly a century, pre-eminently and distinctly a national newspaper.

The *Times*, in its original shape, consisted merely of the day's news, a few advertisements, some market quotations, perhaps a notice of a new book, a few scraps of gossip, and, in the session, a Parliamentary report. The *Morning Chronicle* had the credit, as just mentioned, of inventing the leading article, as it had the credit of inventing Parliamentary reporting. The *Morning Chronicle*, on the 12th of May, 1791, published a paragraph, announcing that "the great

and firm body of the Whigs of England, true to their principles, had decided on the dispute between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke, in favour of Mr. Fox, as the representative of the pure doctrines of Whiggery," and that in consequence of this resolution Mr. Burke would retire from Parliament. It was very short, but this paragraph is the nearest approximation that is to be found in the newspapers of that time to a leading article, and appearing as it did in the part of the *Morning Chronicle* where a year or two afterwards the leading articles were printed, Mr. Wingrove Cooke cites it as the germ of the leaders which, when they became general, gave a distinctive colour and authority to newspapers as independent organs of opinion and criticism.

The idea soon became popular; and in the *Morning Post* and the *Courier* the leading article, developed as it was by Coleridge and Mackintosh into a work of art, often rivalling in argument, wit, and eloquence the best speeches in Parliament, became the object of quite as much interest as the Parliamentary reports themselves. The *Times*, knowing how to appropriate one by one all the specialities of its contemporaries, and to improve upon what it appropriated, was one of the first newspapers to adopt the idea of leading articles, and in adopting that idea, to improve upon it by stamping its articles with a spirit of frankness and independence which was all its own. The controlling mind of the *Times* was the mind of John Walter; but John Walter wrote nothing, or next to nothing, in the *Times*. The writer of the great leaders

—the flash articles which made a noise—was Peter Fraser, a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He used to sit in Walter's parlour (according to Henry Crabb Robinson) and write his articles after dinner. He was never known or formally acknowledged as Editor or principal writer; but he was a man of general ability and the prime adviser and friend of John Walter. The only man who is said to have equalled him was the author of a series of letters signed "Vetus"—John Sterling—and these letters of Vetus were distinguished by a tone of declamation which, if not without its faults, was quite in keeping with the boisterous spirit of the time.

The City Editor of the *Times*, and, when the day's work was over in the City, the musical critic, was Thomas Alsager. He was an intimate friend of Charles Lamb, and was frequently to be found at Lamb's whist parties in the Temple; but in the City Alsager was the *Times*, and his City articles are said to have contributed in no slight degree to the prosperity of the *Times*, by making it what in a great measure it is still, the organ of the City.

Henry Crabb Robinson was foreign editor, and his diary contains an account of the way in which he did his work, which, interesting in itself, is still more interesting from the contrast which it presents to the duties of the foreign editor of to-day. Crabb Robinson's sole duty was to cut out odd articles and paragraphs from other papers, to decide on the admission of correspondence, &c.; "but when I was in my room" (he says) "Mr. Walter was in his, and there

the great leader, the article that was talked about, was written." Mr. Robinson was practically sub-editor.

But the most striking and picturesque figure in the group of men which John Walter gathered around him in Printing House Square was William Combe. He was a remarkably fine old gentleman, and was generally to be found loitering about in Mr. Walter's parlour; but who he was or what he did no one seems to have known. He was tall, with a stately figure and a handsome face. He did very little work with his pen, but he was chiefly a consulting man, and when Mr. Walter was away he used to decide in the *dernier ressort* what should or should not be done. He was an inhabitant of the King's Bench Prison, and when he came to Printing House Square it was only by virtue of a day rule permitting him to go beyond the prison bounds. Mr. Walter, appreciating his services, offered to release him from prison. But this the old man would not permit, because the payment of his debts would be an acknowledgment of the equity of the claim upon which he was imprisoned, and that he declined to make Originally he is said to have been a man of fortune, to have travelled a good deal in Europe, once with Sterne; and Windham, according to Amyot, always, spoke of him with kindness and respect. "He was the first man that ever praised me," said Windham, "and when praise was therefore worth having." But when he had spent his fortune, he took to literature, wrote "The German Gil Blas," and finally, after a life of adventure, found himself at once a prisoner in the King's Bench and an oracle in Printing House Square.

Mr. Walter, living with his family in Printing House Square, used to diversify the monotony of newspaper work by inviting his contributors and personal friends to pleasant little dinners, where they could make the acquaintance of each other and freshen themselves up by chat over the public and personal affairs of the day. There are many references to these dinners in Robinson's diary. This is one of them:—"A small party —Dr. Stoddart, Sterling, Sydenham (Commissioner of Excise), &c. The dinner small, but of the first quality—turbot, turtle, and venison, fowls and ham; wines, champagne and claret. Sydenham was once reputed to be 'Vetus,' but his conversation is only intelligent and anecdotic and gentlemanly; he is neither logical, nor sarcastic, nor pointedly acute. He is therefore certainly not 'Vetus.' He is a partisan of the Wellesleys, having been with the Duke in India. Sterling is a sensible man. They were all unfavourable to the actual Ministry, and their fall within six months was very confidently announced."

It was at one of these dinners that Robinson met Dr. Croly. He was the dramatic critic of the *Times*, and knowing him as we do to-day as rector of a City church and author of the romance of "Salathiel," it is surprising to find him pictured to us as "a fierce-looking Irishman," very lively in conversation, and with a good deal of eloquence; but with "eloquence which, like his person, was rather energetic than elegant," and although possessing great power and concentration of thought, deficient "in the delicacy and discrimination of judgment which are the finest

qualities in a critic." But there is nothing like the diary of a cynic to dispel illusions. Greville could see nothing in Macaulay but a common-looking man in black; and to Robinson Dr. Croly was a fierce-looking Irishman—and nothing more!

CHAPTER XIV.

John Walter the Second—His Character—Pitt's Policy with the Press—The Stamp Act—Persecution of the *Times*—Dr. Stoddart Editor of the *Times*—His Character—Retires from the *Times*—The Editorship Offered to Southey—Declined—Appointment of Barnes—Sketch of Barnes—His Editorship—The *Times* Assumes the Title of "Leading Journal of Europe"—Its Right to the Title.

THE reign of John Walter, practically the founder of the *Times*, ended in the year 1812, and upon his death his son, the second John Walter, took possession of Printing House Square, and, acting in the spirit of his father, with ampler means, soon made the *Times* the power in the State that it has been from that day to this. The *Times* in the year 1812 was only a sort of rival of the *Morning Post*, of the *Morning Chronicle*, and the *Courier*. But the *Times*, even in 1812, was beginning to make its mark in the world, and John Walter, with all the energy, enterprise, and sagacity of his father, possessed a keener intelligence, higher education, and a more dauntless spirit. Independence with him was hardly a virtue. It was almost a vice.

John Walter was one of those men who seem to be always asking themselves whether they are not in the wrong the instant they find any one agreeing with them, and promptly deciding that they must be.

Pitt, finding the Press, as he thought, too powerful, imposed a stamp duty upon newspapers, in order to have some control over their publication. But the Nation was at the back of the newspapers, and even Pitt, with all his popularity and power, was neither popular nor powerful enough to crush the Press. He did all he could to crush it; and the Press never had a sterner master than the Minister who saved England by his spirit and Europe by his example.

But if Pitt's object in instituting prosecutions and imposing stamp duties was to put a gag into the mouth of the Press, he soon found that he might just as well have left the Press alone. He silenced the *Courier* by purchasing it exactly as it stood—plant, copyright, lease of the offices, and everything upon the premises—by turning out the editor and his staff, and replacing them with a corps who instantly transformed the *Courier* into an organ of Constitutional loyalty. He established the *Sun*, placed it under the editorship of one of the Treasury clerks, and retained Peter Pindar upon its staff at a salary which, if not paid out of the Treasury, was probably paid by private subscription among the Ministers themselves. The publisher of the *Times* being impracticable, was marked down for persecution —all the Government printing was taken out of his hands, and everything that could be done to harass, vex, and annoy him was done. But the *Times* held its

own, and held it with courage and independence, in spite of opposition, of stamp duties, of criminal informations, and of annoyances of all sorts, and the *Times* in the end had its reward. It found a better patron in the public than in Pitt.

The founder of the *Times* had been his own editor, perhaps because till then the printer of a newspaper was always its editor; but even John Walter had found it necessary to call in two or three men as advisers and assistants, and his son improved upon this plan by placing Dr. Stoddart in the chair of Printing House Square.

Dr. Stoddart was the first professional editor of the *Times*. Tom Moore has satirised him so freely as "Dr. Slop," that people who take their idea of Dr. Stoddart from Moore suppose Stoddart to have been nothing more than a vulgar and shambling rhetorician with an insane hatred of Napoleon Bonaparte. But this is a complete mistake. Dr. Stoddart was a vigorous and powerful writer, perhaps the most vigorous and powerful writer whose pen was then employed upon the Press, and if his satire lacked the delicacy of Tom Moore's or the wit of Canning's, it may have been none the less effective on that account.

Napoleon found the articles in the *Times* so exasperating, personally as well as politically, that he is said to have taken the opinion of counsel in England as to the advisability of instituting an action for libel against the *Times* in the Court of King's Bench; and the master of the chivalry of France, sensitive, as we all know him to have been, to the

criticism of the Press and the *salon*, was not a man to take offence at trifles which, as they are represented to us by Tom Moore, were chiefly distinguished by bad taste and bad English. Perhaps in the end the violence of Dr. Stoddart's feelings upon political questions made it undesirable in the interests of the *Times* that he should be retained in a position which requires sanity and sweetness no less than sagacity and decision; but the fact that Dr. Stoddart conducted the *New Times* for several years after relinquishing his position in Printing House Square, is in itself a proof that the public mind was in a temper to relish the attacks of the *Times* upon the military despot who was threatening us across the Channel with a force greater than the Armada.

The editorship of the *Times*, upon the retirement of Stoddart, was offered to Robert Southey, a Tory of the Tories. But Southey, with all his Toryism, was not to be lured away from his books, his epic poems, and his histories; and, without condescending to ask a single question about the emolument or the work, he promptly declined the proudest position that the English Press had then or has still to offer to a man of letters. "No emolument, however great," said Southey, in writing to the friend through whom Mr. Walter made the offer, "would induce me to give up a country life and those pursuits in literature to which the studies of so many years have been directed;" and in default of Southey the appointment fell into the hands of Tom Barnes.

The salary that Mr. Walter proposed to offer the

poet of Greta Hall was £2,000 a year and a share in the profits of the paper; and all that he intended to ask in return, was that Southey should write three or four leaders a week, and take a sort of general supervision over the policy of the *Times*. It was apparently the very position for a man of Southey's temperament and habits, a man who apportioned his day with the regularity and precision of a monk: two hours before breakfast to an epic poem, three hours after breakfast to history, the afternoon to a stroll and the *Quarterly Review*, and the evening to reading—one of the most systematic men of letters that ever handled a pen, with clear and precise ideas upon every question of the day, with ample knowledge, and with a pen which was unrivalled in its grace and vigour. Southey was exactly the man that John Walter wanted—a man who, possessing intelligence, system, and precision, could turn out leaders with as much dispatch as his cook turned out a dish of fritters; and Southey, with his clear intellect, might, as editor of the *Times*, have become one of the most conspicuous figures in the political and social life of London. But Robert Southey preferred his £700 or £800 a year, and his quiet home under the shadow of Helvellyn, to all the brilliant associations which surrounded the throne of Jupiter, if his writings as editor of the *Times* were to share the fate of Coleridge's and of almost all newspaper contributions, to be read with careless admiration to-day, and to-morrow to be scattered to the winds like the fugitive verses of the Sibyl on the rocky shores of Cumæ.

The *Times*, in losing Robert Southey, lost a brilliant and distinguished man of letters. But I do not know that it lost an editor equal to the one whom it found in the modest Parliamentary reporter who at the end of the session shut himself up in his Temple chambers to study term reports; for Tom Barnes, if he lacked literary distinction and possessed none of the personal qualities that tend to social success—readiness, wit, frank and graceful manners, or a head and shoulders like Southey's—was a man who lacked none of the other qualities that were needed in the Editor of the *Times*. He was a man of keen intelligence, of fine temper, of high principle, and a man who, writing very little himself, possessed none of the jealousy which, if it is not peculiar to men of letters, is apt to be developed more conspicuously in men of letters than it is in men of the law, of physic, or of arms.

Tom Moore is apt to speak of Barnes, when he refers to him in his diary, in a tone of condescension and patronage; and that was probably the tone in which all journalists were spoken of at that time in the circles where Moore sang his songs, told his stories, and cracked his jokes. It is a tone that is not even yet quite extinct. But Tom Barnes was at least the equal of Tom Moore, in birth, breeding, and education. He was a Cambridge man. He took high honours at the University, and was thought sufficiently good in mathematics and classics to stand as a candidate for a fellowship. He proved, as editor of the *Times*, that he possessed plenty of literary skill, and plenty of

intelligence; but Henry Crabb Robinson admits that Barnes had a somewhat *feist* appearance, and that was fatal with a poet who was petted and flattered in half the drawing-rooms of London as a pocket edition of Catullus. It was during Tom Barnes's editorship that the *Times* assumed the title of "the leading journal of Europe;" and this title Tom Barnes vindicated its right to assume by the intelligence, independence, and public spirit that distinguished its conduct through the years it was under his editorship.

CHAPTER XV.

John Walter Prints the *Times* by Steam—The Inventor of the Steam Printing Machine—Frederick Kœnig—John Walter Purchases Bearwood and is Returned to Parliament—Perry Retires from the *Morning Chronicle*—Transferred to William Clements—Sketch of John Black—An Editorial Sanctum—Black's Integrity—Anecdote of Lord Melbourne and Black—Parallel Anecdote—Captain Sterling and Sir Robert Peel—Edward Sterling—His Contributions to the *Times*—Sterling at Work—Rivalry of the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Times*—Decay of the *Morning Chronicle*—Clement Transfers it to Sir John Easthope—O'Doyle Editor—Fonblanque and Fox Contributors—Failures—The *Morning Chronicle* in the Hands of the Pelites—Its Staff at this Time—Mr. Hayward's Article on Lord Derby—The First Article Published Concurrently with a Parliamentary Debate—Its Effect.

THE most formidable rival of the *Times* at this period, if not its only rival, was undoubtedly the *Morning Chronicle.*

The *Morning Chronicle*, under the editorship of

Perry, stood at the head of the English Press. The *Times* was nowhere. But the *Times* possesses that which none of its rivals possess in an equal degree—staying power; and this power it possessed in its earlier days quite as conspicuously as it does at present. Character, it is said, is fate, and the character of the Walters, father and son, gave the *Times* an ascendency which it has preserved even unto the third generation, and this, too, in spite of the fact that the *Times* is now, and has been for many years, surrounded by rivals which possess equal or almost equal talent, equal resources, equal spirit, and sometimes more than equal enterprise.

The turning point in the history of the *Times* was the adoption of steam machinery for the purpose of printing, and that was the second John Walter's idea—perhaps the most brilliant idea that marked his reign in Printing House Square.

The old system of printing by hand was a dilatory and costly process. You could not at best print more than 300 copies an hour, and the *Times*, with its circulation, had therefore to be set in duplicate, or even in triplicate, and to be printed at a series of hand presses. The consequence was that the circulation of the *Times*, as well as that of its contemporaries, was crippled and hampered in a way which was at once annoying and embarrassing. There was an ever-growing demand on the part of the public for newspapers; that is, for public intelligence of all kinds—for intelligence from the Peninsula, from France, from Germany, from Russia, from India; for intelligence

from the Law Courts, for intelligence from Parliament; and stimulated partly by the stirring events of the time, by the victories of Wellington in the Peninsula, by the Napoleonic drama in Moscow, in Elba, in Paris, and on the field of Waterloo, and partly by the eagerness of the public to know everything that was taking place in the world, newspaper proprietors exerted themselves in every possible way to meet the demand for news and newspapers. But in the face of the old printing presses, with their inking balls and Stanhope rollers, they could do nothing; and the printers, even with three sets of formes, often found themselves working off papers half through the night and all through the day without being able to overtake the demand.

All sorts of plans were devised to meet this difficulty, but none of them turned out to be of the slightest practical good — not even a machine of Isambard Brunel's—till a blue-eyed young Saxon, with flaxen hair, landed in England from a printing office in Leipsic, and offered to do at once what the greatest mechanical engineers that we then possessed had failed to do, even with all the resources of the *Times* at their back and with the prospect of fame and fortune before them.

This was Frederick Kœnig. He was the son of a small farmer in Prussian Saxony, but he seems to have been born with a steam printing machine in his brain. Even in his boyhood he used to play at printing, and to make use of his mother's hand-mangle to work off impressions of type or objects that he had set

up. His father, finding it useless to keep the boy upon his farm, took him to Leipsic, and put him into a printing office. Here Frederick Kœnig spent all his spare time in brooding over a printing machine; and when his apprenticeship was over, he travelled through many of the towns of Germany in search of some one to take up his idea. He could do nothing with the printers of Germany or of Russia; but at last he found his way to England, with a few *kreutzers* in his pocket, his printing-stick in his hand, and an idea in his head which in ten years was destined to revolutionise the printing trade of all Europe. He knew nothing of English, and could not therefore at first earn a livelihood by the use of his printing-stick; but he struggled on, contrived to live, contrived to learn enough of the language to explain his idea, and, when that was done, contrived to find a printer to listen to him for ten minutes while he explained how the "horse work" of printing might be done by machinery, and how the machinery might be worked by steam. Thomas Rensley, a London printer, took Kœnig by the hand, gave him a room in his printing office, and left him to construct his model at his leisure. The construction of this model occupied Kœnig three years; but it was completed, patented, and reproduced in a working machine by 1811.

Kœnig and Rensley thought their fortunes were made. All the newspaper proprietors of London, all the principal printers of London, were invited to meet at Rensley's and see a sheet of the "Annual Register" worked off at the rate of 800 copies an hour. Most

of the printers pooh-poohed the idea. It was impossible! The thing could not be done! Perry, the proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*, said the machine was a mere gimcrack—that it was not worth crossing the road to see. John Walter thought there might be something in it, and he was so struck with the machine when he saw it at work that, after a few minutes' talk with the inventor, he ordered two of his machines—double machines—to be put up in Printing House Square, and by the aid of these machines, on the 27th of November, 1814, the *Times* newspaper was for the first time printed by machinery and printed by steam.

This was all that was required to give the *Times* a pre-eminent position in the Newspaper Press, and the effect was soon seen. The *Times* rose in public estimation, increased in circulation, in advertisements, and in power, till it left all its contemporaries behind, and till John Walter broke up his household, with all its romantic associations, in Printing House Square, set up his penates at Bearwood, and, as the owner of a splendid estate, entered the House of Commons as knight of the shire for Berks.

The *Morning Chronicle* continued to hold its position as a rival of the *Times* for many years under Perry, and under Perry's successor, William Clement, and it is quite possible that it might still have held that position if, in selecting an editor, Mr. Clement had happened to select a man with the tact and sagacity of Barnes.

The Editor of the *Morning Chronicle* during Mr.

Clement's proprietorship was John Black—a man with the spirit of a Drawcansir and the habits of a Carthusian monk. He had, in person, according to Mr. James Grant, all the blunt and bluff appearance of a thick-set farmer. He was never, during the many years of his editorship, to be seen in the streets without being accompanied by a large mastiff, and a robust stick, which he himself called an honest, sturdy cudgel, in his hand; and generally, according to the recollections of another of his staff who knew him as well as Mr. Grant, with a couple of books under his arm, which he had picked up as a bargain at one of the second-hand book-stalls that abounded at this time in the Strand. All his habits were of a piece. Dressing, as he did, in the plainest possible manner, he had an insuperable objection to have his editorial sanctum kept tidy. This extended even to the dusting of his books; the dustier they were the better. They lay, like Dr. Thirlwall's, in heaps all over the floor, and the whole room was in glorious confusion—papers piled upon papers, books upon books. The place was Chaos. Black found his way about the room, it is said, by instinct; but he knew the place of every book, and when chatting with a visitor about any of the questions of the day, he would walk across the room, take down a volume to prove his point, read the passage, and return the volume to its place without removing more of the dust than the operation absolutely required.

Henry Hunt was once asked, in cross-examination in a libel case against the *Morning Chronicle*,

whether he had ever been in Mr. Black's room. "Yes," said Hunt. "And how was the editorial sanctum furnished?—splendidly?" asked the counsel. "I can hardly say that it was." "Can you give the jury some idea of the interior? What do you suppose would have been the value of the furniture?" said the counsel. "I should not think," was the answer, "the whole of the furniture, if sold at an auction, would have fetched more than sevenpence-halfpenny." "Are you serious, sir?" asked the counsel: "Remember, you are on your oath, sir." "I do remember that," said Hunt, "and, remembering it, I hope I have not put too extravagant a price upon the furniture." "Then please to explain, sir," replied the counsel. "How do you arrive at the conclusion that the whole of the furniture in the editorial sanctum of the *Morning Chronicle* is not worth more than sevenpence-halfpenny? Explain how you make that out." "Why," said Hunt, amid the inextinguishable laughter of the court, "there was no furniture at all in the room, except a table and two chairs; and while the table would not have fetched sixpence, no one would have given more than three-halfpence, at the utmost, for the two chairs together."

Yet John Black, with the manners of a bear possessed the soul of a Saladin, and although he did not care sufficiently for his best friend to walk across the street to shake hands with him, he was ready, at a moment's notice, to unlock his pistol-case and fight a duel with the first man who, like Roebuck, impugned

the honour of the fourth estate or its representatives. He was personally the soul of honour, and so proud, personally and professionally, that although in constant communication with her Majesty's Ministers during the administration of the Whigs, he never asked a single favour of one of them. "You are the only man," said Lord Melbourne to him, on one occasion, when chatting with him in his study, "who forgets that I am Prime Minister." "How so, my lord?" asked Black, supposing, for the moment, that he had inadvertently omitted to pay proper respect to the rank of his visitor. "Well," said Lord Melbourne, "you are the only man I know who never asks a favour of me." "I have no favour to ask, my lord," replied Black. "I have no favour to ask any one in the world. You are Prime Minister of England; but I am Editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, and I would not change places with the proudest man in England—not even, my lord, with you."

It is a memorable anecdote, and it is an anecdote that ought to be true. But the Spartan spirit of the Editor of the *Morning Chronicle* found its counterpart a few years later in the spirit of the Editor of the *Times*, or of one of the chief contributors to the *Times*. I refer, of course, to Captain Sterling. In the short administration of Sir Robert Peel, in 1835, Captain Sterling supported the Minister with a loyalty and vigour which distinguished the *Times* from nearly all the rest of the Press, and distinguished it no less from Parliament itself; and the very day that Sir Robert Peel delivered the seals of office into the hands of the

King—that is, on the 18th of April, 1835—he sat down and addressed a note to the Editor of the *Times*, to express his appreciation of the powerful support that he and his Government had received from the *Times*. "If I do not offer the expressions of personal gratitude," said Sir Robert, "it is because I feel that such expressions would do injustice to the character of a support which was given exclusively on the highest and most independent grounds of public principle. I can say this with perfect truth" (added the fallen Minister), "as I am addressing one whose person even is unknown to me, and who, during my tenure of power, studiously avoided every species of intercourse which could throw a suspicion upon the motives by which he was actuated. I should, however, be doing injustice to my own feelings if I were to retire from office without one word of acknowledgment, without at least assuring you of the admiration with which I witnessed, during the arduous contest in which I was engaged, the daily exhibition of that extraordinary ability to which I was indebted for a support the more valuable because it was an impartial and discriminating support."

Edward Sterling's portrait has been sketched by a master-hand. It is one of the most striking and characteristic portraits in Carlyle's "Life of John Sterling." A gallant, showy, stirring gentleman (this is the way in which Carlyle introduces us to the father of his hero) full of talk—generally loud talk—full of argument upon all the questions of the day, full of "abundant, jolly satire," a man with three hundred and sixty-five opinions—an opinion for every

day in the year—upon every subject. Neither Carlyle nor John Sterling knew what to make of the boisterous, dashing Captain of Militia; but even Carlyle admits that he was a gallant, truly gifted, and manful figure of his kind. "An amazingly impetuous, hasty, explosive man, this Captain Whirlwind!" says Carlyle, soliloquising, as was his wont. "'By Jove, sir!' Thus he would swear to you, with radiant face—sometimes, not often, by a deeper oath. With persons of dignity, especially with women, to whom he was always very gallant, he had courtly, delicate manners, verging towards the wiredrawn and elaborate. On common occasions he bloomed out at once into jolly familiarity of the gracefully-boisterous kind, reminding you of mess-rooms and old Dublin days. His off-hand mode of speech was always precise, emphatic, ingenious; his laugh, which was frequent rather than otherwise, had a sincerity of banter, but no real depth of sense for the ludicrous, and soon ended, if it grew too loud, in a mere dissonant scream. He was broad, well-built, stout of stature, had a long, lowish head, sharp gray eyes, with large, strong, aquiline face to match, and walked or sat in an erect, decisive manner."

There was no writing in the Press in those days (1830-40) like Edward Sterling's—nothing to be compared with it in boldness, freshness, point, and vigour. It was the thundering of Jove; and, in fact, it was the writing of Edward Sterling that gave the *Times* the name of the "Thunderer." The story runs that Sterling began one of his articles in this style:

"When we thundered the day before yesterday;" and the *Times* thenceforth, half in mockery, half in admiration, came to be called the "Thunderer." Captain Sterling was the Thunderer; and Carlyle has given us a picturesque sketch of the Thunderer at work. "At one in the morning, when all had vanished into sleep, his lamp was kindled in his library; and there, twice or thrice a week, for a three hours space, he launched his bolts, which next morning were to shake the high places of the world." The whole country listened to the voice of the Thunderer, and generally recognised its own voice in the voice of the *Times*. This is "what the multifarious Babel sound did mean to say in clear words—this, more nearly than anything else;" and it was because Sterling did this, and did it so well, that the *Times* became the power it was in the world at the time.

The *Times* and the *Morning Chronicle* were worthy rivals, equal in spirit and equal in enterprise. It was a race between them for several years, whether the *Times* or the *Morning Chronicle* should take the first place in the English Press. The proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle* organised expresses all over the country for the sake of collecting the speeches of the chief public men of the day, and Charles Dickens was full of stories of the way in which the reporters of the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Times* raced against time and against each other with a speech of Lord Brougham's in Yorkshire or a speech of Lord John Russell's in Devonshire—transcribing their notes upon their knees in post-chaises, and sending their "copy"

on to the office by relays of post-boys. All this enterprise, however, as far as the *Morning Chronicle* was concerned, was thrown away; and Clement, finding that he was carrying on the paper at a loss, transferred it to Sir John Easthope for less than half the price that he had given for it—namely, £16,500.

Sir John Easthope strengthened the staff of the *Morning Chronicle* in every department, secured Albany Fonblanque, the ablest and most caustic journalist then in the ranks of the Liberal party, William Johnson Fox, one of the orators of the Free Trade League, Charles Buller, and other men of the same stamp as contributors, put his own son-in-law, Mr. O'Doyle, in the editor's chair, and organised a system of steam-packet expresses in the English Channel for the sake of ensuring the earliest intelligence from the Continent. But it was all to no purpose. The *Times* did not allow itself to be outstripped with the steam-yachts of Sir John Easthope; Mr. O'Doyle, pleasant and genial as he was personally, did nothing more than John Black had done to promote the circulation of the *Morning Chronicle*, and Albany Fonblanque's articles, although the talk of all the clubs and the admiration of the whole country when they appeared in the *Examiner*, were hardly recognised in the *Morning Chronicle*.

It is possible that the articles themselves may not in either case have been equal to those upon which the reputations of Fonblanque and Fox were based. But there is another explanation, an explanation which is not flattering to the public taste—that the

public in the main only admire those articles which they are expected to admire; and that, I am afraid, is the true explanation. People read the *Examiner* in order to read Fonblanque. They read the *Westminster Review* in order to read Fox. They knew nothing of Fonblanque's contributions to the *Morning Chronicle*, nothing of Fox's, and, knowing nothing, they recognised the hand of neither.

If distinguished names, aristocratic associations, or splendid resources could, in themselves, ensure the success of a newspaper, the *Morning Chronicle* ought to-day to have been all that the *Times* is, or at least a rival of the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily News;* for Sir John Easthope, possessing a staff of brilliant writers and skilful reporters, had access to all the best sources of information, and when he transferred the paper to the Peelites, the staff of the *Morning Chronicle* was still further strengthened in point of resources and of literary skill.

These were perhaps the most brilliant days in its history. The Duke of Newcastle, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Sydney Herbert, and Mr. Beresford Hope were among the proprietors. Mr. Douglas Cooke was editor, and the staff comprised some of the most brilliant and powerful writers of the day—Sir William Harcourt, Archdeacon Venables, Mr. Abraham Hayward, Q.C., Lord Strangford, Professor Goldwin Smith, Mr. Philip Harwood, the present Editor of the *Saturday Review*, and the proprietors themselves. The broughams of these gentlemen, with their crests and liveries, were to be seen

held when his son was placed in the chair of Barnes and Stoddart.

This was in the year 1841. John Delane was then in his twenty-third year—a bright, brisk lad, fresh from Oxford, where, as far as he can be said to have been distinguished at all, he was distinguished more by the dash and decision with which, upon a thoroughbred hunter, he rode to hounds, and by the vivacity with which he took his part in the social life of the place. He is said to have kept his hunter out of the odd guineas which he picked up by contributing articles to newspapers. According to the *Times* itself, John Delane never was a writer, and that may have been so. But he was a man of keen common sense, of clear decisive intelligence, with the habits and manners of a man of the world, and with an eye that detected a false note in an article, a heightened expression, or an inconclusive argument, as a man with a good ear detects a false note in music; and surrounded as he was by able and experienced writers, he began his career as editor of the *Times* with everything in his favour. The *Times*, as we know it to day, may be said to be practically his creation. He was the *Times*. You could trace the man in every line—in its policy, in its temper, in its style, even in the head-lines of the paragraphs; for hardly an article appeared in the *Times* that did not pass under his supervision, and very few appeared that did not bear the traces of his pen. He could write, and write brilliantly, in clear, terse, and vigorous English; but the editor of a daily newspaper has very little

time for original writing. He has to collect and keep together contributors, to settle with them the line that shall be taken upon all the questions of the day, to live a good deal in society; and, except during brief and hurried holidays—too brief and too hurried —John Delane, during six-and-thirty years, was hardly ever away from Printing House Square. He was to be found in his room from ten o'clock at night till three or four in the morning all through those six-and-thirty years; and with the exception of an hour for a canter in the park, for a chat with those whom he happened to meet there—a cabinet minister, an ambassador, a man of letters, a bishop, or a leader of Opposition—all the rest of his day was spent in preparation for the work of the night: at his club, in the lobby of the House of Commons, or in the society of men whose minds and wills guided Senates and controlled Cabinets.

The Editors of the *Times* till Delane's days can hardly be said to have been in society. Tom Barnes lived in the Blackfriars Road, seldom travelled further west than the Houses of Parliament, never mixed in the circles where the contributors of the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews* were domesticated, belonged to no club, and, if he gave a dinner, seldom gave it to any one except the staff of the *Times*. But Delane could not live without society: it was the breath of his nostrils; and the Whig leaders were only too glad to welcome at their dinner tables a brilliant and sparkling talker who, possessing many pleasant social gifts, was a man whom it was worth

their while, upon mere party grounds, to cultivate. "The man who worked the *Times*" was no hermit—no brooding cynic. Alexander Kinglake presents him to us as a man of fresh and vivacious intelligence, florid, bright-eyed, beaming with zeal; a man of those qualities which, in speaking of wine, are called full-bodied and generous; a man of great ardour, great eagerness. And that is the testimony of all who knew him.

There is a pleasant and characteristic sketch of "the man who worked the *Times*," in Trollope's story of "The Warden." Delane lived in his early days in chambers, overlooking the Temple Gardens, with their green turf, their roses, and rhododendrons. "He indulged in four rooms on the first floor, each of which was furnished, if not with the splendour, with probably more than the comfort of Stafford House. Every addition that science and art have lately made to the luxuries of modern life was to be found there. The room in which he usually sat was surrounded by book-shelves carefully filled; nor was there a volume there which was not entitled to its place in such a collection, both by its intrinsic worth and exterior splendour." The chamber contained but two works of art. The one, an admirable bust of Sir Robert Peel, by Power, and the other, a singularly long figure of a female devotee, by Millais, told equally plainly the school of art to which he was addicted.

It was one of Mr. Delane's affectations—he had not many—never to speak of the *Times*, never to take

part in any conversation about it, never to allow any one to recognise in him the Editor of the *Times*, and that phrase of his, "The man who worked the *Times*," was the only one in which he coupled his name with the paper. But his genial nature (as Kinglake puts it) inclining him to let comrades share the elixir by hearing the things he could tell them, his society was beyond measure interesting to men who cared eagerly for the actual state of the world. He used generally to bend conversation in such way as to avoid coming into dispute with his companions, and liked best to reinforce what they said by conveying in anecdote some fragments of that rare knowledge concerning men and their motives with which, because daily the hearer of unnumbered appeals to the *Times*, he was always abundantly armed.

This was the Editor of the *Times* in society—a pleasant, clubable man, full of life and chat, but the last man in the world to show the real eagerness of his nature in the weak, bustling way of people reckoned for nothing, whose time is of scarce any worth. Indeed, as Kinglake says, Delane had "the outward composure, the air of power not yet put forth, that becomes a strong man of action; but it always could be seen that his energies were rather compressed than lulled—that the furnace, if so one may speak, had its fires 'banked up' in the day-time, yet still was always aglow, always ready to blaze into action an hour or two before midnight;" and that was the time when John Delane put forth all those

unrivalled powers which enabled him through six-and-thirty years, through thirteen Administrations, and through one of the most stirring periods of recent history, to guide and control the policy of the *Times* with consummate tact, discretion, and success.

Mr. Delane wrote little, very little, if anything, in the *Times;* but he knew how to select, train, and use all the powers—the skill and intelligence—of the able and distinguished men by whom he was surrounded, and although he is said to have used the pruning-knife with a freedom and frankness that till his time were quite unknown, we have the acknowledgment of the *Times'* writers themselves that his taste, if severe, was pure, and that his revisions, alterations, and suppressions generally strengthened and improved an article.

Mr. Delane made mistakes of course—all men do; but when at the close of his night's labours he put on his coat and lighted his cigar to walk through Fleet Street to his chambers in the grey of the morning, he left Printing House Square knowing that he had honestly, to the best of his powers, done all that a man could do; and the best proof of the sagacity, good sense, and patriotic spirit that marked John Delane as a journalist is to be found in the six-and-thirty volumes of the *Times* which bear, one and all, the impress of his mind and the mark of his hand.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mount Olympus—Trollope's Description—Emerson's Visit to Printing House Square—The Pretensions of the *Times*—How these Pretensions are Justified—Archdeacon Denison and the *Times*—Its Prestige—Illustration of this Prestige—Mr. Baldwin's Experiment—*Times*' Writers—Who and What they have Been—How its Reputation has been Built up—A National Institution.

"WHO has not heard of Mount Olympus—that high abode of the powers of type, that favoured seat of the great goddess Pica, that wondrous habitation of gods and devils, from whence, with ceaseless hum of steam and never-ending flow of Castalian ink, issue forth 50,000 nightly edicts for the governance of a subject nation?

"Velvet and gilding do not make a throne, nor gold and jewels a sceptre. It is a throne because the most exalted one sits there, and a sceptre because the most mighty one wields it. So it is with Mount Olympus. Should a stranger make his way thither at dull noonday, or during the sleepy hours of the silent afternoon, he would find no acknowledged temple of power and beauty, no fitting fane for the great 'Thunderer,' no proud façades and pillared roofs to support the dignity of this greatest of earthly potentates.

"'Is this Mount Olympus?' asks the unbelieving stranger. 'Is it from these small, dark, dingy buildings that those infallible laws proceed which Cabinets are called upon to obey; by which bishops are to be guided, Lords and Commons controlled, judges instructed in law, generals in strategy, admirals in naval tactics, and, orange-women in the management of their barrows?'

"Yes, my friend—from these walls. From here issue the only known infallible bulls for the guidance of British souls and bodies. This little court is the Vatican of England. Here reigns a pope, self-nominated, self-consecrated—aye, and much stranger too, self-believing—a pope whom, if you cannot obey him, I would advise you to disobey as silently as possible; a pope hitherto afraid of no Luther; a pope who manages his own inquisition, who punishes unbelievers as no most skilful inquisitor of Spain even dreamt of doing—one who can excommunicate thoroughly, fearfully, radically; put you beyond the pale of men's charity; make you odious to your dearest friends, and turn you into a monster to be pointed at by the finger."

This description of Printing House Square, vivid and picturesque as it is, is not without an undertone of mockery at the power and pretensions of the *Times;* and the same tone is to be traced in Emerson's account of his visit to the seat of the great goddess Pica. "We walked with some circumspection," says Emerson, in his "English Traits," "as if we were entering a powder-mill; but the door was opened by

a mild old woman, and, by dint of some transmission of cards, we were at last conducted into the parlour of Mr. Mowbray Morris, a very gentle person, with no hostile appearances;" and that, I suppose, is the impression which a visit to Printing House Square makes upon most people.

Yet as far as it is possible for a newspaper to justify the pretensions of Printing House Square to be to Englishmen what the Temple of Delphi was to the Greeks, the *Times* has justified them by its boldness, by its independence, and by its thoroughly English and patriotic tone upon all public questions and upon the conduct of every administration that has ruled in this country from the days of Pitt and Fox to those of Beaconsfield and Gladstone.

It is quoted all the world over as an oracle, and in Constantinople, Cairo, and Calcutta its articles on Turkish, Egyptian, and Indian questions are translated into Greek, Arabic, and Hindustanee, and read with at much interest in bazaar and mosque as they are read in the club windows of Pall Mall or St. James's Street. It is spoken of by Englishmen themselves everywhere with respect, and no controversy is supposed to be closed till the *Times* has given its verdict. And that, as a rule, is final. "If Scripture said one thing in England and the *Times* newspaper another," said Archdeacon Denison, a few years ago, in a sermon in Wells Cathedral, "five hundred out of every five hundred and ten people would believe the *Times*."

This is due, in part, to the prestige of the paper.

But it is due in part also to the brilliant power of the men who write in the *Times*.

Perhaps at present the staff of the *Times*, take it all in all, is not a whit superior to the staff of the *Standard*, of the *Daily News*, of the *Daily Telegraph*, or of the *Morning Post*. But the *Times* has always contrived to secure some of the best pens of the day in its service; and, somehow, the prestige of the paper gives to an article appearing in the *Times* a weight and authority which, whatever the article itself may be, it would never possess in the *Daily News*, in the *Standard*, or in the *Daily Telegraph*.

This was once put to the test in a very striking manner by Mr. Baldwin, the proprietor of the *Morning Herald*.

Mr. Baldwin, thinking that nothing was wanted but equal energy, enterprise, and skill to make the *Morning Herald* all that the *Times* was, made up his mind (according to Mr. James Grant), without counting the cost, to secure a staff of Parliamentary law reporters, a staff of correspondents, and a corps of contributors equal, or even superior, to those of the *Times*, if they were to be had for money; and, as far as men and machinery were concerned, Mr. Baldwin succeeded. He stationed steam-yachts on the French coast to pick up the Indian mails. He increased the salaries of his Parliamentary reporters, paid for every kind of news at a higher rate than the *Times*, doubled the fee for leading articles, and, ascertaining, as far as possible, the name of every contributor whose writing in the *Times* was conspicuously clever,

he offered £5 5s. an article where till then no newspaper had paid more than £2 2s., in order to induce the writer to transfer his contributions to the *Morning Herald.*

These tactics were in many cases successful. Some of the best Parliamentary and legal reporters —some of the best leader-writers upon the *Times*— were induced to transfer their services from Printing House Square to Shoe Lane. The consequence was a marvellous change in the tone and style of the *Morning Herald.* It possessed all, or almost all, the best men upon the London Press.

Yet in the *Morning Herald* the contributions of men whose articles in the *Times* never failed to be read with interest and admiration made no more sensation than Fonblanque's did in the *Morning Chronicle.* The *Morning Herald* did not possess the prestige of the *Times;* and prestige with a newspaper is what prestige is with an army, or style with an orator. It is an intangible influence—an invisible efflux of personal power, a magical force, which touches the imagination. An article which produces no effect at all when published in a paper without the prestige of the *Times,* is read in the *Times* itself as a brilliant and powerful expression of national opinion.

This prestige tells, of course, in its turn upon public writers. It is a distinction in itself to write in the *Times,* and the consequence is that, till now, and even now with a few conspicuous exceptions, the best men upon the Press have found and still find their way into Printing House Square.

It is the boast of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* that every Frenchman who has been distinguished in literature, politics, art, or science in our time has contributed to its pages; and the boast, I believe, is true. Here, till now, the most distinguished of Englishmen have, as a rule, rather eschewed the Press; or if they have taken up a pen to write, have preferred the *Edinburgh*, the *Quarterly*, or the *Westminster Review* to the newspapers. Yet even with this drawback, the *Times* has contrived to secure as contributors some of the most distinguished men of our time. Brougham wrote for the *Times* even when sitting upon the woolsack. Lord Beaconsfield, if he did not write articles, wrote a series of letters which made as much sensation in their day as the letters of Junius or the letters of Vetus. The Dean of Westminster's MS. was as well-known to the compositors of Printing House Square as it was to the editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, and some of the earliest and most brilliant of Cardinal Newman's contributions to the controversies of our time were published in the *Times* under the signature of "Catholicus." The initials of Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne were for many years as familiar in the *Times* as the type itself. Lord Grey constantly wrote as "Senex." Canon Blakesley wrote quite as constantly as "The Hertfordshire Incumbent." Macaulay and Moore published some of the most sparkling of their satires in the *Times*. Sir William Harcourt was a contributor to the *Morning Chronicle* and to the *Saturday Review* long before he began to write in the *Times;* but it

was in the *Times* that Sir William Harcourt, as "Historicus," first made his mark with the public as a contributor to the Press.

It may be said, of course, that these men, if contributors to the *Times*, were not part and parcel of the staff of the *Times*. The distinction is a fine one to draw. But, fine as it is, I do not know that it is a distinction that can be drawn in every instance—in Sir William Harcourt's, to wit, in Dean Stanley's, or in Lord Brougham's; and even if it were so, I do not know that the regular contributors to the *Times* have not been quite as distinguished as "the light militia of the lower sky." Lord Sherbrooke, as Mr. Lowe, was, for many years, one of the most constant and brilliant of the *Times*' contributors. Sir Henry Austin Layard was another. That wild Irish scholar who still lives as the author of the romance of "Salathiel," Dr. Croly, was, in his early days, to be found every night in one of the quiet rooms of Printing House Square with a pen in his hand; and the tall, stately form of Dean Milman used frequently at one time to be seen in the garden which marked the site of the *Times*. Sir Robert Peel thought Sterling's articles, if delivered as speeches in the House of Commons, would have given him one of the proudest places in the assembly; and Jones Loyd's contributions to the *Times*, when reproduced in St. Stephen's, did give him a position as one of the best authorities upon banking and currency. Those articles of Bailey's on the Corn Laws, which were at one time the talk of all the clubs in London, did as much to educate the Nation in the theory of Free Trade as the

terse and picturesque eloquence of Charles Villiers or the persuasive logic of Cobden. The names of Barnes, Horace Twiss, and Mosely are not names to conjure with to-day; but they are all three the names of contributors to the *Times* who did good service in their day. John Arthur Roebuck was a contributor to the *Times*. Abraham Hayward, I believe, is one still. Gilbert à Becket is known to-day principally by those comic histories which he contributed to *Punch*. But Gilbert à Becket won his position on the Bench by his racy articles in the *Times;* and he is the only man, it is said, who ever wrote "a complete *Times*." Brougham boasted that he wrote a whole *Edinburgh Review;* Shirley Brooks wrote a whole *Punch;* and Gilbert à Becket is said on one occasion to have written all the articles in the *Times*. I might add many more names —that of Wingrove Cooke, of Alexander Knox, till recently one of the magistrates of Marlborough Street, of Jacob Omnium, of Sir George Dasent, of John Oxenford, of the Hon. George Brodrick, of James Caird, of Tom Taylor, of the present Under Secretary of the Home Office, Leonard Courtney; but if I were to add a dozen names, I should not exhaust the catalogue of men who, either as contributors or as correspondents, have been associated with Printing House Square and have left their mark upon the *Times*.

It was the habit of Barnes, when Editor of the *Times*, to keep his eye upon the reviews and magazines in order to pick up contributors, and there have been few distinguished men of letters, from the days of

Barnes to those of Prof. Chenery, who have not been solicited to write for the *Times*, or who have not in one form or another been dipped in the ink of Blackfriars. It is in this way that the reputation of the *Times* has been built up; and I see no reason why the *Times*, under the editorship of the brilliant and distinguished scholar who to-day sits in the chair of Barnes and Delane, should not maintain the reputation which the *Times* has possessed for two generations of being the classic authority upon all questions of Parliamentary and legal reporting, and, in itself, as a newspaper, the most striking and characteristic of English institutions.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Contemporaries of the *Times*—Repeal of the Paper Duties —Its Effect on the Cheaper Papers—The *Standard*—The *Daily News*—The *Daily Telegraph*—Origin of the *Daily News*—Charles Dickens as Editor — Dickens Resigns — John Forster takes his Place—Losses upon the *Daily News*—Its Reorganisation and Revival—Its War Correspondents in 1870—Its Editor and Staff.

THE *Times*, during the greater part of Mr. Delane's editorship, had the field practically to itself. But it is not so now. Professor Chenery has to face rivals on every hand—rivals at once rich, powerful, and enterprising.

The abolition of the Paper Duties twenty years

ago wrought a revolution in the publication of newspapers, and completely altered the position of the *Times* in comparison with its rivals.

The *Times*, till then, stood so conspicuously at the head of the Press, that it was a case of Eclipse over again. The *Times* was first and the rest nowhere.

The *Morning Chronicle*, rich as it was in its traditions and personal associations, languished and died in the hands of men who neither valued the one nor knew how to preserve the other. A career of rare splendour and success ended in squalor and scandal. The *Morning Herald* challenged the supremacy of the *Times*, and challenged it with singular boldness; but the proprietor of the *Morning Herald*, with all his boldness, finished his career in the Bankruptcy Court. The *Morning Post* has held its own through a century, and under the editorship of one of the most distinguished of English journalists, Sir Algernon Borthwick, it still holds its own to-day with distinction and success among a host of brilliant rivals. But the *Morning Post* has never thought of measuring itself against the *Times*, as the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Morning Herald* did. Its *rôle* in the past at any rate, a *rôle* sufficiently honourable in itself, has been a *rôle* without ambition beyond those regions of sweetness and light where it has so long sparkled with a placid brilliance all its own.

At the time of the repeal of the Paper Duties there were three newspapers in existence, which no one ever thought of coupling in the same sentence with the *Times*, even in flattery—the *Standard*, the *Daily*

News, and the *Daily Telegraph*. Yet the repeal of the Paper Duties, the growth of population, the increase of public intelligence, and the development of political life, have in the course of twenty years given these papers such a position that to-day they almost threaten to extinguish the *Times* itself with their restless energy and diversified enterprise.

The *Standard* had been in existence for a couple of generations, and had been at one time, as the champion of the Protestant interest, one of the most popular and powerful newspapers within the four seas; but in 1861 the *Standard*, with its proprietor in the Bankruptcy Court, was apparently struggling against a sea of troubles. The *Daily News* was only about fifteen years old; but, except that it was not in the Bankruptcy Court, it was not in a very much better plight than the *Standard*. The *Daily Telegraph* was still in its infancy, and it was a sickly infancy. It had only just completed its first lustre, and it was apparently never destined to see a second.

The *Daily News* owed its origin to Charles Dickens. Dickens wrote a few articles in the *Morning Chronicle* during the editorship of Mr. O'Doyle which, according to his ideas, ought to have been paid for at the rate of £10 10s. each. The editor was quite willing to pay £10 10s. each for these special articles; but he hesitated to pay at that rate for a series of articles that Dickens proposed to contribute; and Dickens, refusing to write at all unless he was paid at this rate or more, began to turn over in his mind the idea of a newspaper of his own.

The result was the publication of the *Daily News*. Messrs. Bradbury and Evans entered into the scheme with an enthusiasm almost equal to Dickens's. They took a large interest in it themselves; and they induced Sir Joseph Paxton, Sir Joshua Walmsley, and Sir William Jackson to take a still larger share. Charles Dickens' name was at that time a name to conjure with. It was the name of the most popular writer of the day, and a newspaper conducted upon popular principles under the editorship of Charles Dickens seemed destined beforehand to be a brilliant success.

All the preparations were upon a scale of unexampled munificence. The provinces were swept for skilful reporters. The ablest men in the Liberal ranks were secured as contributors. The salary of the editor was fixed at £2,000 a year, and all the rest of the salaries were in proportion. I know a distinguished writer who, upon the strength of a successful book which made a hit at the time, was offered £600 a year for a couple of articles a week. The appointments of the office, it was said, resembled those of a Duchess's boudoir. The desks of rosewood and the inkstands of silver. The books of reference were all bound in Russia and gold. The porters were all in livery. The story ran that the letters to the editor were presented upon a silver salver. Perhaps a good deal of this was mere satire; but it was all currently believed at the time; and Charles Dickens published an address in the first number of the *Daily News* which tended to keep up the illusion. It was written in the style of a Knight Errant. The mission of the *Daily News*

was to regenerate the world, to redress all the wrongs of society, to maintain all its just rights, and to secure the happiness and welfare of the whole people.

The *Daily News* made its appearance on the 21st of January, 1846—the day on which Sir Robert Peel rose in the House of Commons to propose the repeal of the Corn Laws. Charles Dickens was full of enthusiasm for ten days; and at the end of that time full of disgust. His position lost all its charm the instant the work began to pall; and on the 7th of February, "tired to death and quite worn out," he took up his pen and, instead of writing his customary leader, addressed a letter to the proprietors requesting to be relieved from an intolerable position.

The proprietors of the *Daily News* had made all their arrangements on the faith of Dickens's name, and within a fortnight of the publication of the paper Dickens resigned! John Forster, at that time Editor of the *Examiner*, was induced with all promptitude to take Dickens's chair; and Dickens continuing to write letters in the paper, everything was done to keep up the illusion that the author of "Pickwick" was still the soul of the *Daily News*. But Dickens, finding that he could not keep the paper out of his thoughts while in London, packed up his books and took himself off to a luxurious cottage upon the Lake of Geneva, to write a Christmas carol and to pore over the story of "Dombey and Son." Here, surrounded by vineyards, corn-fields, and pastures, with the waters of the lake sparkling at his feet, with the Castle of

Chillon lying bathed in sunlight in the distance, and with the birds singing under his study window, Charles Dickens soon cleared his mind of all the disagreeable associations of Bouverie Street. Before the year was out, Knight Hunt had relieved Forster of the editorship of the *Daily News*, and had gathered around himself a staff of contributors second to none then to be found in London—Douglas Jerrold, Dr. Lardner, Harriet Martineau, and M'Cullagh Torrens.

The staff of the *Daily News* lacked nothing that a newspaper staff ought to possess. Its articles were clever and brilliant; its reports were ample and accurate; its Indian intelligence, secured at great cost, was not less prompt than that of its rivals. But the *Daily News* did not take. The public declined to read it at any price; and its publication entailed nothing but vexation and loss. A man who cannot afford to lose £100,000 ought not, perhaps, to think of publishing a daily newspaper at all. But it is not every man who can sit down with patience and see £200,000 disappear in a Serbonian bog without the slightest prospect of a return; and that is said to have been the case with the *Daily News* and its proprietors. When the Paper Duties were repealed, instantly a change came over the spirit of the dream. The drain was stopped. The paper rose in circulation, and, under Mr. Thomas Walker and Mr. J. R. Robinson, it began to acquire influence by its high tone and transparent honesty—an honesty which was never more conspicuous than when alone, or almost alone, it espoused the cause of the North

against the South in the American Civil War, and ran the risk of paying for its courage and consistency by an act of bankruptcy.

But there is a limit to the losses that men will bear even for the luxury of publishing a newspaper to advocate their own views, and the original proprietors of the *Daily News*, a few years ago, transferred their interest to a fresh set of men. This transfer formed the turning point in the history of the *Daily News*. The proprietors brought fresh capital into the concern, the staff was re-organised and strengthened, the price was reduced to a penny, and, the Franco-German War breaking out as it did at the moment, a set of special correspondents, unrivalled in freshness and brilliancy—Archibald Forbes, MacGahan, and Skinner—were sent into the field, and sent with orders to transmit their letters by telegraph, without counting the cost, instead of transmitting them, as the letters of special correspondents had all been transmitted till then, through the post. The effect of this new policy was soon seen. The *Daily News* sprang at a bound into the front rank of the Newspaper Press, and the proprietors had the gratification of taking up the *Times* one morning and of finding one of their own telegrams of the previous day transferred bodily into the leading journal, with a generous acknowledgment which did equal justice to the *Times* and the *Daily News*.

The *Times* till then had never found itself distanced by its contemporaries. All the honours of the Crimean War were its own; all the honours of the Indian

Mutiny were its own; all the honours of the Seven Weeks' War in 1866 were its own. But in the Seven Months' War, the *Times*, even with its own famous special in the field,—the pen of the Crimean War, Dr. Russell,—found itself for the first time anticipated by a telegram from Metz; and the *Times*, mortified, as it must have been, had the generosity to acknowledge itself beaten by a rival who had, till then, never been supposed to be a rival at all.

The reputation which the *Daily News* won by its war correspondence in 1870, it contrived to keep all through the Russian campaign in Turkey, all through the Indian famine, all through the Afghan campaign, and all through the Zulu War, and to keep principally by the aid of the pen which won its virgin honours in 1870—that of Archibald Forbes; but within the past year even Archibald Forbes and MacGahan have found a rival in the adventurous Irishman, Edward O'Donovan, who has recently penetrated, with his life in his hand, through the trackless deserts of the Tekké Turcomans and the Tandara Mountains, to the citadel of Merv itself, with no companion but a pocket compass, which he could hold in the palm of his hand, and his own stout heart.

The Editor of the *Daily News*, Mr. Frank H. Hill, has well maintained the high character which the paper acquired during the editorship of Mr. Thomas Walker; and if the *Daily News* is not able to boast of a staff of leader-writers equal to that of the *Times*, it may at least congratulate itself upon possessing in Mr. Justin M'Carthy a graceful and picturesque

writer, whose "History of Our Own Times," with all its faults, is one of the most popular works of its kind that has been published since Lord Macaulay's "History of England." William Black, Robert Giffen, Edmund Yates, George Macdonald, and Westland Marston have all been contributors to the *Daily News*. Andrew Lang, G. Saintsbury, Grant Allen, Moy Thomas, William Senior, and H. W. Lucy are so still; and the "Political Portraits" of the Editor, if not perhaps equal to the letters of Junius, as they are sometimes said to be, are the most caustic and characteristic sketches of their kind that have appeared in the Newspaper Press in our day.

CHAPTER XIX.

The *Daily Telegraph*—G. A. Sala—His Contributions to the *Daily Telegraph*—Thornton Hunt—Edwin Arnold—Col. Sleigh—Origin of the *Daily Telegraph*—Messrs. Lawson and Levy—How they Reorganised the Office and Carried on the Paper—Its Growth and Prosperity—Anecdote of Archibald Forbes—Mr. Smith's Assyrian Expedition—Mr. Stanley's Expedition—Policy of the *Daily Telegraph*.

THE *Daily Telegraph* has done many things to claim a conspicuous place in a sketch of the Newspaper Press. It was the first daily newspaper in our day to be published at a penny; and it was published at a penny when all the rest of its contemporaries were published at fourpence. It has sent one special commissioner to

Assyria to explore the antiquities of "Bible Lands." It has sent another commissioner into the heart of Africa to explore the sources of the Nile. It has invented a new form of English; and we never know when we take it up at breakfast whether we shall not find in it an announcement that the proprietor is fitting out an expedition to the North Pole to do what Sir George Nares declared to be impracticable. But these are not all, and not perhaps its greatest achievements. The *Daily Telegraph* has brought out the powers of George Augustus Sala as perhaps no other journal could have done; and that, in itself, is almost enough for fame.

George Augustus Sala, if not the most distinguished, is the most characteristic of English journalists. There may be abler men, wittier men, more brilliant men; but Mr. Sala combines brilliancy, wit, and ability of a high order, and combines them in such a serviceable form that he is to-day one of the most popular of English writers, and as a newspaper contributor without a rival in his own special line. Dr. Russell and Mr. Archibald Forbes may sketch a field of battle in a way that Mr. Sala could not touch; but fields of battle do not, happily, often call for the descriptive powers of a Russell or a Forbes; and, except upon a field of battle, Mr. Sala is practically a man without a rival. His readiness, his picturesque sensibility, his aptitude for vivid and graphic writing, his great powers of expression, and his still greater powers of illustration, constitute him the beau-ideal of a journalist. Art, literature, fiction,

antiquities all are alike to him. There is no subject that he is not prepared to write a column upon at ten minutes' notice—a comet, a speech, a *coup d'état*, a crisis in Paris or Pekin; and there are not many subjects upon which, if he takes up his pen at ten o'clock, he cannot by midnight turn out a chatty and readable column for the next morning.

The *Daily Telegraph* possesses many able men upon its staff—men who have made politics the study of their lives, scholars, sportsmen, special correspondents of the most diversified and distinguished attainments, picturesque writers of all sorts, critics who have neither failed in literature nor art. But even among men of this calibre, the most striking and conspicuous figure is that of this gentleman who, with a vivacity and energy that have never been surpassed, has travelled over the greater part of the world as the special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, and is now, at fifty-three, to be found in his study most mornings turning out articles and critiques upon the topics of social life, of art, or literature, marked by all the freshness and vigour of thirty-five. The secret of immediate success in a public writer is said to be mediocre ideas and a taking style, and I do not know that there is anything so original in Mr. Sala's ideas that I can explain his success upon a more flattering hypothesis than this. But whatever the explanation may be, Mr. Sala's success is conspicuous and indisputable. He has written books which constitute a library in themselves—works of travel, works of fiction, burlesques, biography,

criticism. These works are to be found upon every bookstall and in every circulating library. Many of them have gone through a succession of editions. But Mr. Sala, with all his diversified gifts, is pre-eminently and above all a journalist—a man endowed by nature with the precise gifts that are needed in a special correspondent and in a writer of leading articles; and it is as a leader-writer and special correspondent that he will be best remembered. His contributions to the *Daily Telegraph* have for many years been one of the most characteristic features of the paper. They were at one time almost the only things in the paper that people read or talked of when they had read. The *Daily Telegraph*, under the editorship of Mr. Edwin Arnold, has taken a higher stand as a political organ than it held under Mr. Thornton Hunt; but till Mr. Edwin Arnold's brilliant and scholarly articles made the *Daily Telegraph* a distinct power in political circles, Mr. Sala's social articles were so conspicuously the chief feature of the paper that the public insisted upon recognising Sala as clearly in everything in the *Daily Telegraph* as it used to recognise Charles Dickens in *All the Year Round* and John Delane in the *Times*.

The *Daily Telegraph* owes its origin to Col. Sleigh. It was published as a single sheet, at 2d., on the 29th of June, 1855, and published under difficulties which would in six months have killed any man of less sanguine temperament than the man in whose fertile brain it originated. It came into the hands of the Lawsons and the Levys as a bad debt. But the

Lawsons and the Levys, possessing resources which Col. Sleigh never commanded, possessed with these the sagacity and enterprise that were needed quite as much as money itself. The circulation of the *Daily Telegraph* when the Levys took possession of the paper was small. The advertisements were smaller. Mr. Levy reduced the price of the paper from 2d. to 1d., secured all the best telegraphic news, strengthened its Parliamentary corps, and retained as contributors and critics men who were at least equal to those upon the staff of either of its contemporaries—Thornton Hunt, George Augustus Sala, Edwin Arnold, Sutherland Edwards, Godfrey Turner. The fruits of this policy were soon seen. The circulation doubled, trebled, quadrupled. The advertisements increased with the circulation. But, with all this, the balance was still on the wrong side of the account. Mr Gladstone at an opportune moment repealed the Paper Duty, and that to the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* was, it is said, equivalent to a present of £12,000 a year. It set Messrs. Levy and Lawson on their legs. The £12,000 was all spent in the improvement of the paper. Its articles became bolder and fresher, its telegrams fuller, its reports ampler. The liveliness, sparkle, and vigour of its style soon distinguished it from all its contemporaries except the *Times*, and the *Times*, published as it was at 4d., where the *Daily Telegraph* was published at a penny, hardly came into competition with the *Telegraph*. The American War did much for the *Daily Telegraph;* the war of 1866 did more; but the war

of 1870 did most; for all through that war the *Daily Telegraph* was well served by a staff of special correspondents who, by freely using the telegraph, raised the paper to a level with the best of its contemporaries. It possessed no special correspondent like Dr. Russell or Archibald Forbes; but if it possessed no single man of pre-eminent distinction, it possessed plenty of hardy and active men who knew how to use their eyes, their pens, and their legs—and legs to a special correspondent are often quite as valuable as eyes or a graphic pen.

In the thick of the war of 1870 a travel-stained, weary, and haggard soldier, in a long overcoat and a forage cap, appeared in Fleet Street fresh from a field of battle, and glancing at the newspaper offices which crowd the street, crossed and recrossed the road, in doubt whether to enter the *Daily Telegraph* or the *Daily News*. He finally decided to try the *Daily News*, and, entering the office, asked to see the manager. He was shown into Mr. Robinson's room, and he explained his business. He was fresh from the field of battle, with the notes of an interesting episode of the war in his pocket; but he must be paid, and paid handsomely, for his intelligence. His price was high, and the *Daily News* was poor; but Mr. Robinson closed with the offer upon the stairs, as the correspondent was impatiently bouncing out of the office, and the *Daily News* printed the next day three or four columns of description, every line instinct with life and vigour, from "Our Special Correspondent. The letter made a hit, a palpable hit, and the writer

returned the following morning to the French camp as one of the special correspondents of the *Daily News*, to make his own fortune and the fortune of the journal which, by a fluke, had the good luck to secure him as its representative.

The traveller was Archibald Forbes; and if, instead of turning into Bouverie Street, he had happened to turn into Peterborough Court, the *Daily Telegraph* to-day might have been able to number among its enterprising band of correspondents the famous special of the *Daily News*.

But even without Archibald Forbes, the *Daily Telegraph* possesses men who, like the Peninsular Army, are ready to go anywhere and do anything; and by sending the late Mr. George Smith, as it did, to Assyria on an exploring expedition, and, in conjunction with the *New York Herald*, Mr. Stanley to Africa, the proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph* has shown that, if his predecessors knew how to build up a great English newspaper, he knows equally well how to take opportunity by the hand in a prompt and generous spirit when anything worth doing has to be done, and how to strengthen and extend the reputation of the journal which has come into his hands.

CHAPTER XX.

The *Standard*—Its Origin—Roman Catholic Emancipation—Dr. Giffard—Anecdote of the Duke of Newcastle—Collapse of the *Standard*—Mr. Johnstone Purchases the *Standard*—Its Staff—Mr. Mudford Editor—The Note of his Policy—Independence—The Character of the *Standard*—Its Future.

THE *Standard*, till a few years ago, was not a morning newspaper at all. It was an evening edition of the *Morning Herald*. It is even now published in a duplicate form. The *Standard* is a morning and an evening paper, and is the only London newspaper which now appears in this duplicate form.

The *Standard* owes its origin to the controversy upon Roman Catholic Emancipation. It was established to defend the Throne, the Constitution, and the Protestant religion, and through more than half a century, with a loyalty like that of the Cavaliers themselves, it has been true to its principles and traditions.

It is said that in the year 1826, a deputation representing the High Protestant and Tory party called upon Mr. Baldwin, the proprietor of the *St. James's Chronicle*, a paper still published in Shoe Lane, and proposed that he should bring out an evening paper to support the cause of the Throne and our Protestant Constitution, in opposition, I presume, to the *Sun*, which was at that time strenuously supporting the cause of

Emancipation. Mr. Baldwin checked the enthusiasm of his visitors for a moment by explaining the probable cost of publishing an evening paper. It was, of course, a mere matter of money, and that was the ground upon which Mr. Baldwin frankly put it. "Messrs. Stevenson and Salt are my bankers. Lodge £15,000 there to my credit, and within a week you shall have a daily evening paper." The £15,000 was paid into the bank, and the *Standard* appeared in 1827.

It was published under the editorship of a man who had the reputation of being the most powerful writer of the day in the Protestant interest—Dr. Giffard—and Dr. Giffard's articles promptly carried the *Standard* everywhere. The Duke of Newcastle is said to have been so struck by the power of one of the articles in the *Standard*, that he presented the Editor with £1,200, in order to show his appreciation of the eloquence and vigour of the Protestant champion. The whole country was in a state of white heat about the Roman Catholic claims, and the *Standard*, in resisting these claims, was, for a few years, one of the most popular papers in the British Isles. Its circulation was a portent. Its profits are said to have been £7,000 or £8,000 a year.

These were the palmy days of Protestant ascendancy. The Roman Catholic Relief Act passed. The glories of Great Britain as a Protestant State passed away. Protestant enthusiasm cooled, and the *Standard*, representing a lost cause,

hung its head, languished and drooped, till, sharing the fortunes of the *Morning Herald*, it found its way at last into Basinghall Street. Here it fell into the hands of a professional accountant, Mr. James Johnstone, who, if he knew nothing of newspapers, knew enough of the principles of success in business to know how a newspaper must be conducted if it is to flourish; and the *Standard* is to-day what Mr. Johnstone made it by his skill and sagacity. Its growth has been slow, very slow, in comparison with the growth of some of its contemporaries; but to-day it has not many rivals in enterprise and success. It has not yet developed a Sala, a Russell, or a Forbes. Its staff, with two or three exceptions—Colonel Brackenbury, Alfred Austin, T. E. Kebbel, Captain Henty, and Mr. Fred Boyle—is not a staff whose names are at all familiar to the public; but the *Standard* possesses leader-writers, reviewers, art critics, special correspondents, and a corps of Parliamentary reporters who are not a whit inferior to those of the *Times*, and in its Editor it possesses a journalist who, clothed with absolute power over the policy and management of the paper, knows how to use that power with intelligence, decision, and energy.

This is Mr. W. H. Mudford.

Perhaps with the exception of Mr. Delane, no man ever rose so rapidly as Mr. Mudford has risen from the ranks of his profession into one of its highest positions. And no man has more brilliantly vindicated the sagacity which placed him in a position of power and responsibility. It was, till a year

or two ago, a constant reproach to the *Standard* that it had neither a mind nor a will of its own—that it played the part to the Conservative leaders which Mr. Cruger professed to play to Edmund Burke—"I say ditto to Mr. Burke." The reproach may have been just or unjust; but, just or unjust, it was one that was fatal to the *Standard*. The *Standard* was the organ of the Conservative party, and as such it had a large circulation among Conservatives. It was enterprising and energetic; and people who wished to have early intelligence read it for the sake of its news. But politically it was a cipher. You knew beforehand everything that it would say upon the questions of the day. It had but one function—to say ditto to Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli; and that it said with equal candour and consistency. The *Standard* is still Conservative, as Conservative as ever it was. But the *Standard* is no longer the mere party organ that it was. It is independent, and independence is the note of Mr. Mudford's management. It is, I think, an honourable note; but it is a note that Conservatives are so little used to that many of them to-day may well be pardoned if, with their ideas of party journalism, they cannot understand how the *Standard* calls itself Conservative at all. The complaint to-day is that the *Standard* is too independent: that you never know, when you take it up, what it will say upon any of the topics of the day—whether it will be Conservative or Liberal in its views. All that you know is that, like the *Times*, it will take a frank and

independent view; that, independently of its own criticism, you will find in its columns all the latest and fullest telegrams from every part of the world where there is anything stirring that is of the slightest interest to Englishmen; and that, next to the *Times*, it will contain the amplest reports of all the speeches of the day.

There is no business or pursuit in the world which taxes the energies and resources of men more than that of journalism, because there is no business in the world in which rivalry is keener; and to say that in a couple of years the *Standard*, under the editorship of Mr. Mudford, has distanced all its contemporaries, and frequently distanced even the *Times*, is to say that the *Standard* possesses at its head to-day a man of rare resources and of rare judgment, that it possesses in all its ranks a staff which is distinguished by intelligence, ability, and power, and that its future is a future which, whether in peace or war, is likely to add fresh lustre to the Newspaper Press.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Provincial Press—What it Was—What it Is—How the Change has been brought about—Railways and Telegraphs—How they affected Provincial Papers—How the Provincial Papers have Recovered their old Position—What that Position is—The Peculiarity of England—How London differs from Rome and Paris—Not a Metropolis—How great Movements originate in the Provinces—Mr. Gladstone's Opinion of the Provincial Press—Lord Beaconsfield's—The Newspaper Train.

THE Provincial Press calls for a chapter by itself.

A hundred and fifty years ago there were not twenty newspapers published out of London, and those that were published bore a strong resemblance to the newspapers that are published to-day in the towns and villages on the shores of Lake Superior or Lake Huron. These American papers are not bigger, many of them, than a sheet of foolscap, with a few advertisements, a few scraps of personal chat, a report of a town's meeting, and a few words of independent criticism; and that, with the exception of the independent criticism, was the case with the newspapers that were published in Worcester, Winchester, Salisbury, Exeter, Norwich, and Edinburgh till the early part of this century. To-day there are upwards of two thousand newspapers published in the British Isles, with an aggregate circulation which, if piled into a heap, would overtop the dome of St. Paul's.

Thirty years ago there was not a single daily newspaper published out of London, and in London itself there was not a single daily paper published at a penny. Yet to-day, with the exception of the *Times* and the *Morning Advertiser*, there is not a daily newspaper published at more than a penny, and that is the case almost throughout the provinces. Here and there, in the remoter parts of the country, where population is sparse, where railways and telegraphs have not yet abolished time and space, there are newspapers still to be found—old county newspapers —which keep up the standard of 2d. and 3d. But in all the chief centres of population the higher priced papers have been killed by the penny papers, or compelled to fall into line with them, and in the majority of cases the weekly and bi-weekly newspapers have been turned into dailies. The difficulty twenty years ago was to find a town or city out of London with a daily paper. To-day the difficulty is to find a town or city of the slightest note without a daily newspaper; and through Baron Reuter, the Press Association, electric telegraphs, and special wires, the Provincial Press is, in point of intelligence, practically on a level with that of London.

The London Press, till the establishment of electric telegraphs, had almost a monopoly of public intelligence. The Provincial Press was emphatically a local press. If it reproduced the parliamentary debates at all it reproduced them in a very condensed form; and interesting themselves only with the affairs of the county where they were published, the provincial

newspapers were seldom seen out of their own peculiar districts. Here they were looked upon as oracles; and the men who conducted them stood so high in the estimation of their fellow-townsmen that they were frequently singled out for parliamentary representatives. This was the case with Mr. Edward Baines at Leeds. This was the case, too, with Mr. Brodie at Salisbury. The development of the system of short-hand reporting—the expresses of the *Times* and the *Morning Chronicle*, when men like Charles Dickens and James Denison were sent all over the country to report the speeches of Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, Lord Durham, Lord Grey, and Lord Brougham, and had to transcribe these speeches upon their knees in postchaises, travelling all through the night at ten or fifteen miles an hour, and to transmit their MS. when it was done by post-boys, did a good deal to disturb the quiet preserves of the Provincial Press. But the Provincial Press soon secured shorthand reporters in its turn, and the prestige of newspapers like the *Stamford Mercury*, *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, *Keene's Bath Journal*, *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*, *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Journal*, the *Newcastle Courant*, and the *Kentish Mercury*, was not to be broken by a freak of reporting on the part of the *Times*, and wherever the provincial papers adapted themselves to the altered state of things, they held their own successfully.

The establishment and extension of railways was another severe shock to the Provincial Press, because it brought the Provincial Press into direct

competition with the London Press. But railways quickly brought with them electric telegraphs, improved trade and commerce, a vast increase of population and wealth; and the proprietors of the provincial papers, adhering to their old *rôle*, took care to adapt themselves to the improvements that were taking place around them. Reports of speeches, reports of parliamentary debates, leading articles upon the topics of the day, began to appear in the Provincial Press; and Englishmen are, as a rule, so conservative in their ways and habits, so attached to the things which form part and parcel of their life and of its associations, that till the publication of penny newspapers a few years ago the position of the Provincial Press was hardly touched, and when it was touched the establishment of cheap and universal telegraphs soon put the Provincial Press upon a level in point of intelligence with the London Press.

The course of events has wrought a vast change in the Provincial as well as the London Press; but the changes have been faced in most cases with courage and sagacity, and the result is that the Provincial Press of Great Britain never stood higher in public estimation than it stands to-day. Its system of reporting is equal to that of the London Press, frequently better. It is equally prompt and almost equally full with its intelligence. Its comments upon public questions and public events lack none of the intelligence and none of the grace of style that mark those of the London Press, and the telegraph has placed us all so completely on a level that the

editor of a Plymouth, Leeds, Glasgow, or Liverpool paper, sitting in a quiet room four or five hundred miles away from Westminster, is, with the help of a staff of parliamentary reporters and a special wire, in constant and instantaneous communication with Parliament in Session. He is practically as near to the centre of political life as if he were in Peterborough Court or Printing House Square. In the Recess, of course all are equal.

In its main features the Provincial Press is of necessity a reproduction of the Press of the Metropolis. It is distinguished, like that, by enterprise, by boldness, by a high tone of intelligence, and by literary culture. But if this were all, perhaps the Press of the provinces might be allowed to merge its history in that of the London journals which I have selected from the crowd in order to trace the rise and growth of the Newspaper Press. It is because the Provincial Press of this country is *not* a provincial press that it calls for notice at all. London is not, never has been, and never will be, the Metropolis or Mother-city of Great Britain in the sense in which the City of the Seven Hills was the metropolis of the Roman Empire, or in the sense in which Paris is the metropolis of France. It is the capital of the Empire. It is the seat of Government. It is, in the Parliamentary Session, the residence of the Court; and in the Parliamentary Session it is, in consequence, the centre of all political action and of all political intelligence. This, of course, gives distinction and lustre to London. But the instant Parliament rises, London ceases to be any-

thing but the chief city of the Empire. The Court is transferred to a highland glen. The Ministers, in bowlers and pea-jackets, are to be found upon the shores of highland lochs, upon Yorkshire moors, or upon the banks of salmon or trout streams in Herefordshire, in Devon, in Bucks, or strolling through the woods that lie around a Flintshire castle with a book or an axe. All that gives life and lustre to London vanishes as if by a stroke of magic, and London, instead of giving the cue in political discussions to the provinces, takes its cue from the provinces themselves. Even during the Parliamentary Session itself some of the most important speeches of the year are spoken, not in Parliament, but at the provincial gatherings which still keep up the political life and traditions of those towns and cities which, if inferior to London in many of the things which constitute the charm of social life, are its equal, and collectively more than its equal, in point of political weight and importance.

In proportion to its population and wealth, there is no city in Europe which possesses less political weight than London. All political movements culminate there, and through the Press of London of course every political movement owes much of its success to the co-operation of the capital. But London itself hardly originates anything. It has originated none of the national movements of our time, except, I believe, that for the repeal of the taxes on knowledge. It did not originate the movement for the abolition of the Slave Trade. That began in York-

shire. It did not originate the movement for Roman Catholic Emancipation. That began in Dublin. It did not originate the movement for Parliamentary Reform. That began in Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham; and it was through the action of these towns that it was carried to success. It did not originate the movement for the repeal of the Corn Laws. That was the work of a handful of Manchester men. All the revolutions of France begin in Paris and end in the provinces. But with us the case is reversed. All the revolutions of English history began in the provinces and ended in London. Our Parliamentary Constitution, as Lord Beaconsfield once said at a market ordinary, was born in the bosom of the Chiltern Hills, as to this day a parliamentary career is terminated among its hundreds. "Buckinghamshire gave us the British Constitution in the seventeenth century, and it created the British Empire in the eighteenth." Even now, if a Minister of the Crown or a Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition speaks in the recess, he speaks to his constituents at one of those gatherings which are taking place all through the year in the provinces, at a ploughing match, at a cattle show, at a diocesan conference, at a rent audit, or at a dinner of the Borough Reeve, and thus the provinces may be said to possess a distinct and separate political life independent of the life of the City which, by a misnomer, is called the Metropolis.

The only newspapers in London that will bear comparison with those of the provinces in point of antiquity are the *St. James's Chronicle* and the

Morning Post. All the rest are things of yesterday by the side of *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, the *Newcastle Chronicle*, the *Exeter Flying Post*, and the *Cambridge Chronicle;* and one of the most interesting facts about the Newspaper Press is the way in which, when newspapers began to appear, they appeared concurrently in all the chief centres of population and trade in the British Isles. The Provincial Press has naturally been a thing of much slower growth than that of London, and at one time it looked as if the Press of London were about to supersede and suppress the Press of the Provinces. But the Provincial Press has always been in the hands of men of energy, of enterprise, and intelligence, and these men having held their own through a century or more knew how, when they were threatened with extinction by railways and electric telegraphs, to reorganise their staffs upon a system which should place them as nearly as possible upon a level with their London contemporaries. This has been the work of the last twenty years, and it is a work that has been so successfully accomplished that Mr. Gladstone recently recognised in the Provincial Press a truer reflex of the public opinion of the country than that of London. This opinion, when it was first expressed, led to a good deal of criticism; but the event did much to prove that Mr. Gladstone was not so far wrong as his critics supposed at the time. Nor did Mr. Gladstone stand alone in thinking thus highly of the Provincial Press. I have on my table a letter from Lord Beaconsfield, written when he was at the head of affairs, expressing his

appreciation of a series of articles which were published in a provincial paper, and which, as he said, whether with regard to their accurate information, good judgment, or power of expression, were equal to those of any Metropolitan journal. Yet these articles n themselves were nothing more than a sample of the articles which appear day by day in all the chief organs of opinion in the provinces; and those who know anything of the working of the Newspaper Press know perfectly well that in the *personnel* of their staff there is very little difference between the staff of a first-rate provincial journal and the staff of a first-rate London journal.

Take the *Manchester Guardian*. Its profits are said to amount to £30,000 a year. It possesses sources of intelligence in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and everywhere else, equal to those of the *Times* or the *Standard*. It frequently publishes news which is even in advance of that of the *Times* and the *Standard*. Its articles are marked by all the intelligence and finish which distinguish those of its London contemporaries. It possesses its own corps of Parliamentary reporters, and staff of special and ordinary correspondents, and during the late war on the Continent the *Manchester Guardian* frequently published telegrams and intelligence which were of the highest interest and importance. All the speeches that are reported by the London newspapers day by day in and out of the Session are published with equal fulness by the *Manchester Guardian*, and till the Society journals made their appearance a few years

ago, and began to publish a class of intelligence which had, till then, been ignored by the London papers, the *Manchester Guardian*, through its London correspondent, was, even for London news, a very much better newspaper than the *Times* or the *Morning Post*.

And the *Manchester Guardian* does not by any means stand alone. All or almost all that the *Manchester Guardian* does with brilliant success is done with more or less brilliancy and success by ten or a dozen provincial newspapers, by the *Leeds Mercury*, by the *Liverpool Daily Post*, by the *Newcastle Chronicle*, by the *Scotsman*, by the *Glasgow Herald*, by the *Manchester Examiner*, by the *Birmingham Daily Post*, by the *Western Morning News*, by the *Irish Times*. All these papers—and I only give these as specimens of many more which might be named, and which ought to be named with them—have offices in London side by side with the offices of their chief contemporaries; and the electric telegraph, with the co-operation of Baron Reuter, puts every newspaper on a level with its rivals if, with equal means, it possesses equal enterprise. Almost all the chief provincial newspapers now possess a special wire which, with an efficient staff of reporters and correspondents in London, places them in a position to publish all the chief news of the day concurrently with the newspapers of London, and to publish it with equal amplitude and accuracy.

The proprietors of the *Times*, finding, a few years ago, that they were losing ground in the country through the enterprise of their provincial contem-

poraries, made a bold and determined effort to regain their old position by making arrangements with the railway companies to distribute the *Times* all through the country three hours before any of its rivals could be upon the ground, and thus practically to publish, all over England at least, concurrently with the Provincial Press. But the monopoly of the newspaper train was soon broken down by the *Daily News*, the *Standard*, and the *Daily Telegraph*, and to-day all the London newspapers are upon a level, and these in their turn are practically upon a level with the newspapers of Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, and Bristol. Till the newspaper train was started, the provincial papers had five or six hours' start of the London papers, and that with busy people, who insist upon having all the news of the day upon their breakfast tables with their coffee and rolls, is everything. The provincial newspapers were the only newspapers that could be delivered with the milk in the morning, and the provincial newspapers had the field everywhere to themselves. The Newspaper train threatened for a time to put an end to this monopoly. But it has done nothing of the kind. I do not believe that the Newspaper train, although a great public convenience, has increased the circulation of the London newspapers in anything like the proportion that it was apparently expected to increase them. The proprietors of the Provincial Press, put upon their mettle as they were, promptly did all that the emergency required, and the result is, I believe, that the Provincial Press stands far higher to-day than it

stood when the Newspaper train threatened it with extinction. This is shown in a variety of ways. It is shown by the increased and still increasing circulation of the Provincial Press. It is shown by the way in which provincial papers are read and quoted. But it is shown most conspicuously of all by the way in which provincial journalists are selected as parliamentary representatives. The Provincial Press has always been far less an impersonal Press than the London Press. The proprietors, the editors, the contributors to the Provincial Press have always been far better known than the men whose writings have constituted the life and soul of the London Press, and year by year the provinces have for several Parliaments been sending up provincial journalists to Westminster as their representatives in St. Stephen's.

CHAPTER XXII.

Newspapers and Literature—The Functions of Newspapers—The Literature of Newspapers—Reviews—How they Differ—The *Saturday Review*—The *Examiner*—The *Spectator*—The *Pall Mall Gazette*—The Society Papers.

NEWSPAPERS, in themselves, are not literature, except in the sense in which playbills are literature. They are political circulars, trade circulars, price currents, weather charts, advertisement sheets, parliamentary reports, law reports, police reports—all very excellent,

all very necessary things in their way, but they are not literature. The leading articles are often works of art. The reviews, especially those in the *Times*, often approximate as nearly to works of art as things of that kind can do. The sketches of travel, of scenery, of adventure, of war, by which the special correspondent now and then proves the truth of Lord Salisbury's description, that he is a man who combines the skill of a first-rate steeplechaser with the skill of a first-rate writer, are frequently perfect in themselves, full of romance, full of life, full of touches which attest the hand of a master. Here and there, too, in our newspaper-reading most of us, as Dean Stanley once said, have come across a sketch—almost a Shaksperian sketch—of some complex and brilliant character. Here and there all of us can recall some words which, in the midst of some great national crisis, have come home to us with the force of genius, and once, at least, in a time of great national sorrow, one of our newspapers (the *Daily News*) added a prayer to our national devotions which, as the Dean of Westminster confessed, even our venerable Liturgy need not have been ashamed to own. But the primary and principal use of newspapers is to reproduce for us day by day a picture of the state of the world, to give us an account of what has been said and done, of what is doing, and of what is about to be done, and to tell us, with all this, what we ought to think and feel about everything—about an opera, a speech, a crime, or a crisis—what we ought to think if we are Liberals, what we ought

to think if we are Conservatives, and even what we ought to think and feel if, instead of coming under either of these two classifications, we chance to belong to some less comprehensive category, and happen to be Radicals, Positivists, or Æsthetes. To report and to criticise, that is the main business of a newspaper: to report with accuracy, and to criticise with intelligence, promptitude, and precision, and the newspaper that does this best is the best newspaper.

But there are newspapers and newspapers, that is to say, there are newspapers and reviews. It is inevitable that the newspapers, published as they are day by day, should sometimes publish incomplete reports and hasty views, and hence the necessity for reviews. The writing in these publications may or may not be better than that of the morning or evening newspapers. I do not think it is, taking the writing all the year round. But it is written under different conditions. It is written, or ought to be written, after mature thought, after cooler reflection, in less haste and less hurry, and generally, therefore, it may be said to bear a closer resemblance to literature, as far as political discussion, religious controversy, or social criticism can be said to bear any relation to literature at all. The work of a leader-writer upon a morning newspaper is to take up a telegram or a speech, and, under the inspiration of a cigar or a cup of coffee, at midnight to say with as much point and brilliancy as time and circumstances will allow when a printer's devil is standing at his door for copy, all that people of intelligence, common sense, and culture will

say the next morning, or expect to find said for them in order that they may have the gratification of seeing their own opinions in print, and of expressing their concurrence with the journal which it is their will and pleasure to read. This sort of writing bears the same relation to literature that fresco painting bears to oil painting. It must be free, bold, striking and characteristic. But it need not be much more, and if it is the work is thrown away. That, however, is not the case with the articles in the *Saturday Review* and the *Spectator*, in the *Athenæum*, in the *Academy*, or in the *Guardian*. These all admit of more elaboration, of more art, of more scholarship, of more finish. The *Times*, the *Standard*, the *Morning Post*, the *Daily News*, and the *Daily Telegraph* are read by men over their second cup of tea or coffee at breakfast, read at a stand in a club, in a railway carriage, in an office or a counting-house. The reviews are read in an easy chair, in a smoking-room, in a quiet library or study, perhaps an hour or two after dinner, and that makes all the difference in the world.

The *personnel* of journalism is mixed, must be mixed. It contains, as a writer who knew it well once said, a huge number of persons who have tumbled or scrambled into it, with only the culture of clever men, whom accident and a natural bent have set down to the desk of a *litterateur*; but with the *Saturday Review* a new era began for journalism and even for literature in general. More and more since the *Saturday Review* began one can trace in newspaper

writings the culture and the *esprit de corps* of the highly-educated Englishman, the self-suppression, the drill, the uniformity, the half technical honour, the ostensible frankness, and at the same time, real *equivoque* of good society. Yet the original staff of the *Saturday Review* was, in the main, the staff of the *Morning Chronicle*, in those palmy days when three or four broughams were to be seen standing under the shadow of St. Clement's Church, and when men, who till then had never thought of polluting themselves with printer's ink, were constant contributors to a morning newspaper. The Peelites and Puseyites who bought the *Morning Chronicle* found the money to start the *Saturday Review* when the *Morning Chronicle* was found to be too expensive a luxury to keep up longer, and the Editor of the *Morning Chronicle* under that *regime* became the Editor of the *Saturday Review*. It was not entirely a new thing in journalism, for at the time that Mr. Douglas Cook and his staff crossed the Strand from the rooms where the shadows of Perry and John Black still lingered to those which as yet possessed no shadow at all, the *Spectator*, the *Examiner*, and the *Press* were all in existence. But the *Saturday Review*, nevertheless, introduced a fresh note into the journalism of the day. It was neither Liberal nor Conservative. It was independent. Independent of parties, or professing to be, independent of all the personal associations of politics, it was free, frank, and dashing in its style, full of satire, direct, personal and pungent, full of scholarship, and distinguished in

every line by the tone of society which till then marked no part of the Newspaper Press, except perhaps the *Press*. This soon began to tell; the staff of the *Saturday Review*, originally a strong one, comprising as it did some of the most vigorous intellects and some of the freshest pens of the day, grew and strengthened every year till Mr. Douglas Cook had the gratification of seeing around his table at Greenwich a score of men who represented at once the flower of the universities, the flower of the clubs, and the flower of journalistic literature. Politics, law, literature, art, religion, all alike did their best to contribute to the *Saturday Review*, and for a good many years the *Saturday Review*, if it stood a little lower in public estimation than the *Times*, stood next to the *Times* alone.

The *Saturday Review* was founded partly on the lines of the *Examiner* and *Spectator*, and partly on the lines of the *Revue des deux Mondes*. It combined the best features of all three. But where the *Examiner* and the *Spectator* had depended on the wit or intelligence of one man, a Fonblanque or a Rintoul, the *Saturday Review* enlisted the services of a dozen men, and by making it a distinction in itself to contribute to its pages, soon secured contributions from all the best men at Oxford and Cambridge, all the best men in the Temple and Lincoln's inn, and all the best men in the Church. The consequence was that the *Examiner*, when it lost Fonblanque and Forster, began to languish and droop; but the *Spectator*, falling into the hands of a couple of men who possessed in a

high degree some of the highest qualities of English journalists—Messrs. R. H. Hutton and Meredith Townsend—quickly recovered its old ground, the ground that it had held in the days of Rintoul, and won for itself, as the representative of the Philosophical Radicals, a position which is at least equal to that of its perhaps more distinguished rival.

These two reviews for years stood alone, and, as reviews, may perhaps be said to stand alone still, because rivalling the old quarterly reviews in scholarship and acumen, they surpassed them in the readiness and skill with which they did once a week what the old quarterly reviews did only at long intervals.

But a successful newspaper or publication of any kind is not allowed to stand alone very long without a competitor or a rival, and the *Pall Mall Gazette* was published in 1865, partly to fill a blank that then existed in the journalism of the day—the evening journalism—and partly to adapt the principle of the review to the Newspaper Press of the day. The proprietor and editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* have always repudiated the suggestion that the paper was published upon the lines of Thackeray's *Pall Mall Gazette*, as a journal written by gentlemen for gentlemen; but the associations and even the style of the paper have been too much for them. The proprietor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* was Thackeray's publisher. The editor was Thackeray's assistant in the conduct of the *Cornhill Magazine*. They christened their paper with Thackeray's title. The conclusion was irresistible. The *Pall Mall Gazette* must be the

ideal journal written by gentlemen for gentlemen, and that the public have persisted in considering it from the first day of its publication. And the tone of the paper has strengthened the public in their belief. Its tone has from the first been aristocratic —the tone of the club window, of the smoking-room of the House of Commons, and of the drawing-room. You read your column or column and a half of vigorous, polished matter—read it with relish. It is keen, scholarly, and trenchant. You feel that you are reading the work of a man who knows all the ins and outs of the question he is handling—that he is a man with a cool head, a strong intellect, and a powerful pen—that he is a man who has cleared his mind of all cant before he took up his pen at all, and that possessing strong common sense he possesses with it a calm and perhaps cynical temper which sees and hears everything and sees through everything. The pleasure which you derive from reading an article of this kind is of a piece with the pleasure which you feel after a pleasant chat at a well-appointed dinner-table, where your companions are men who know all that is taking place behind the scenes, know the motives of the chief actors in the game of politics, and who generally know where the cards are. It is not a high tone. It is a tone that is *caviare* to the multitude. The tone that suits the multitude best is the tone of the young lions of Peterborough Court. But it is a tone that tells with men of cultivation—with the politicians of the clubs, of the smoking-room of St. Stephen's, and of those people who, possessing no par-

ticularly earnest convictions of their own upon any matter, think earnest convictions in other men all nonsense, things to be scoffed at in a pleasantly cynical tone. This was the tone of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. This is still the tone of the *St. James's Gazette*. All the marks that distinguished the *Saturday Review* in its early days distinguished the *Pall Mall Gazette* under the editorship of Mr. Fred. Greenwood; and Mr. Greenwood, thoroughly appreciating the tone that ought to mark an evening journal upon the lines of the *Saturday Review*, secured as contributors to the *Pall Mall Gazette* many of the men who had till then been known chiefly as contributors to the *Saturday Review*. The result in the case of the *Pall Mall Gazette* as in the case of the *Saturday Review*, was a splendid success, and till a couple of years ago, the *Pall Mall Gazette* continued to be, what from the first it was apparently intended to be—an independent journal with a distinct tendency, to Conservatism. It is now, under the editorship of Mr. John Morley, as distinctly Radical as of old it was distinctly Conservative, and the Conservative spirit which, mingled with scholarship and satire, distinguished the *Pall Mall Gazette* under the editorship of Mr. Fred. Greenwood, now animates the *St. James's Gazette*.

The Society papers, as it is the fashion to call them, are to some extent modelled upon the Reviews They are an attempt, and in the case of the *World* a successful attempt, to reproduce the most striking parts of the *Saturday Review* and the *Satirist* in a

single publication. The *World* owes its origin partly to Mr. Edmund Yates and partly to Mr. Grenville Murray; but in its existing form it is almost entirely the creation of Edmund Yates. It is a newspaper *sui generis*. Its tone is peculiar to itself. Its style is peculiar to itself. Its gossip is almost peculiar to itself. Mr. Edmund Yates held for many years an appointment at St. Martin's-le-Grand; but from his earliest days he has cultivated letters and journalism. He wrote articles, sketches, and criticism for the *Daily News*, for the *Star*, for the *Daily Telegraph*, fiction for Charles Dickens in *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, plays for the theatres, and London Letters for the provincial newspapers. But it was not till his retirement from the Post Office that he seems to have thought of establishing the *World*, or, if he thought of it, that he possessed the means to carry out his idea. The *Anti-Jacobin Review*, the *Age*, the *Satirist*, and *John Bull* had all shown that a paper devoted to personal gossip and criticism might, if conducted with discretion, be made a very popular newspaper; and Mr. Grenville Murray had brought out this fact afresh with the *Queen's Messenger*, and brought out also the equally clear fact that if a Society paper was to flourish it must be conducted with some slight amount of discretion—that the line must be drawn somewhere. This experiment was not thrown away upon Mr. Yates. The *World* in its earlier days had its fair share of actions for libel; but an action for libel, if it does not ruin a paper, often makes it, and that is what the actions

against Mr. Edmund Yates did in the case of the *World*. They doubled, trebled, and quadrupled its circulation, and the *World*, possessing a staff of able and distinguished writers, an incomparable City editor in Mr. Henry Labouchere, an incomparable Parliamentary sketcher in Mr. H. W. Lucy, an incomparable Paris correspondent in Mr. Grenville Murray, and a political writer of rare power in Mr. T. H. S. Escott, in the course of a few short years attained a degree of popularity which, if it does not surpass the *Saturday Review*, surpasses all the Reviews and Society papers which were published before the *Saturday Review*.

The *World* for two or three years stood alone. But the usual result followed. Columbus had shown how the egg could be made to stand on its end; and everyone could make it stand on end afterwards. Mr. Henry Labouchere discontinued his contributions to the *World* and set up *Truth*—a publication which in all its main features is a reproduction of the *World* without the Attic salt of Edmund Yates and his contributors. Mr. Henry Lucy discontinued his sketches "Over the Clock," and set up *Mayfair*, and for two or three years *Mayfair* was one of the most popular and taking of the Society papers. It possessed among its contributors some of the best writers of the day—Mr. Giffen, the head of the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade; Dr. Hueffer, at present musical critic of the *Times;* Mr. Andrew Lang, and Mr. H. J. Byron, and some contributors who, if not distinguished as writers, were in positions which gave them the

opportunity of keeping the paper *au courant* with Parliamentary and Club life—Sir Wilfred Lawson, Col. Burnaby, and Mr. Sullivan. But *Mayfair*, under Mr. Lucy's editorship, lacked one thing, and lacking that lacked almost everything. It kept clear of scandal. I do not believe it had a single action for libel during the time it was published. This fact, I believe, makes *Mayfair* unique in Society journalism.

"Ah! hadst thou wisely spent thy span that's sped
In lying while alive, instead of dead;
Hadst thou but deigned such common arts to use
As sharper Gentiles learn from craftier Jews—
From lower key (hole) struck less modest airs,
Nor feared the sound of boots upon the stairs;
Then might new worlds have hailed King Libel's reign,
Nor we been left to waltz and weep in vain."

The only Society journal which seems to flourish without the stimulating aid of actions for libel is the *Whitehall Review*. The *Whitehall Review*, like *Mayfair* and *Truth*, is an offshoot of the *World*. It owes its origin to Mr. Edward Legge, and, possessing in him an editor of equal intelligence and tact, and contributors who, like those of the *World* and *Mayfair*, are familiar with the social life of the West End, the life of the City, and the inner life of Parliament and the Court, it has won for itself a position which is all the more honourable from the fact that it is due in no degree to the violation of the usages of Society. The *Whitehall Review*, however, unlike *Truth* and

the *World*, does not depend entirely upon its literary attractions. It publishes week by week portraits of all that is distinguished, by rank, beauty, or accomplishments, in the drawing-rooms of London, and this constitutes one of its special features. It holds among Society journals the place that the *Morning Post* holds among newspapers, and in this sphere has but one rival—*Vanity Fair*. But *Vanity Fair* is a host in itself. It is, after all, the Society paper *par excellence*. It is chary of scandal, especially of the grosser forms of scandal. But it is more than either of its rivals the journal in which the *cachet* of fashionable life is to be distinguished, and its gallery of portraits, from the unrivalled pencil of Pelligrini, is enough in itself to give *Vanity Fair* an unique position among the journalism of to-day. All that Hogarth and Gillray did for the public men of their day, Pelligrini has done for the public men of our day by his series of caricatures in *Vanity Fair*. Mr. Thomas Bowles is the proprietor and editor of *Vanity Fair*, and Mr. Bowles has shown with rare tact and success how a Society journal, dealing as it does with the trifles of the day, may be made in itself a work of all but the highest art.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Future of the Press—Review of its Developments and Conquests—The Special Correspondent—Mr. W. H. Russell—In the Crimea—Mr. A. Forbes—The Omnipresence of the Press—Its Missions — Mr. G. Smith's to Assyria — Mr. Stanley's to Africa—Mr. O'Donovan's to Merv—How Newspapers now lead Public Opinion—The Duties of the Press—How they are met—The Echo—The Tone and Spirit of the Modern Press—The End.

WHAT is the future of the English Press to be?

It is impossible at the close of a sketch of this kind to avoid asking the question; but it is a question that the boldest of us are not bold enough to answer.

The Press in the course of a century has achieved many triumphs. It has arrogated to itself some of the proudest functions of Parliament: its function of initiatory legislation, its function of criticising and controlling Ministers; many of the functions of an ambassador; and a few of the functions of the Ministers themselves. It is, I admit, a mere figure of speech to call the Press an estate of the realm. It is not, and never can be that. But it is a second representation of the Third Estate, and it is in a fair way to rob the Third Estate of one of its highest titles—that of the Grand Inquest of the Nation. The Press is in many respects a popular Parliament, a popular court of justice, a court of honour, and a court of criticism upon every

question that can arise—upon all questions of public conduct, upon all questions of public and private morals, upon questions of religion, and upon questions of taste.

The development of the Press as an independent political power dates from the Reform Bill in 1831. Till then newspapers had never thought of discussing the principles of Government in their broader sense. They attached themselves to this or that Minister, attacked or defended this or that treaty, this or that policy. But in 1831 the Press struck out a bolder line. It, so to speak, set up for itself; and I very much doubt whether, without the Press, the Whigs, with all their eloquence and Parliamentary skill, could have carried the Reform Bill through Parliament as they did. That achievement is due as much to the Press as to Lord Grey, Lord Brougham, or Lord John Russell. The Press, by reporting the speeches of these men, quadrupled their power in Parliament, and made them, in the truest sense, that which, till then, no public men had been, except perhaps in the case of Pitt—the leaders of the nation. The Press organised the nation, and it was in organising the nation as it did that the Press discovered its own powers.

The great battle of Free Trade and Protection developed still further the powers and resources of the Press. Sir Robert Peel found that, with the Press at his back, he could defy even his own mutinous followers to turn him out of office till the work he had taken in hand was accomplished; and the Press itself was not long in discovering that if it did not

possess the actual power of making and unmaking Ministries, a Parliamentary minority, with the Press at its back, was more powerful than a Parliamentary majority without the support of the Press.

A few years passed away, and the Crimean War arose. That war was in a great measure the work of the *Times*. The Ministers themselves were like the poor cat in the adage, letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would." Parliament was perplexed. The Nation itself hardly knew what to think or do. The *Times* pronounced for war, and the Ministers took their policy from the *Times*.

The Crimean War was the first war in which special correspondents took part; and the *Times*, by a stroke of luck, which is all the more remarkable when it is considered that it was a pure accident, was represented in that war by a man who seemed to be intended by nature for the work which has made him famous—William Howard Russell. Mr. Russell was not the man originally selected to represent the *Times* in the expedition to the Crimea; but at the last moment it was discovered that the gentleman who had been selected could not go, and Mr. Russell, a reporter in the gallery of the House of Commons, was hastily put in his place, and when there was found to be, above all other men, the man for the place.

Mr. Russell knew nothing of war—of its science, of its scenes, or of its associations; but he was a bold, powerful, and picturesque writer, with a faculty for reproducing in terse and telling English, sketches of scenery, of camp life, and of war which have never

been surpassed; and through his letters the English people found themselves living day by day in Lord Raglan's camp upon the shores of the Black Sea as familiarly as if the British army were bivouacked on the Hog's Back or in camp at Aldershot.

His opportunity of gathering intelligence, as Mr. Kinglake says in his sketch of the famous special of the *Times*, depended, of course, in great measure upon communications which might be made to him by officers of their own free will; and it is evident that to draw full advantage from occasions found in that way, the inquirer must be a man so socially gifted that by his own powers of conversation he can evoke the conversation of others. Russell was all that, and more; for he was a great humourist, and he was an Irish humourist, whose very tones fetched a laugh. If only he shouted "Virgilio!"—Virgilio was one of his servants — the sound, when heard through the canvas, used often to send divine mirth into more than one neighbouring tent; and whenever, in solemn accents, he owned the dread uniform he wore to be that of the late disembodied "militia," one used to think nothing more comic could ever be found in creation than this "rendering" of a "live Irish ghost." In those days, when the army was moving, after having disembarked at Old Fort, he had not found means to reorganise the needed campaigning arrangements which his voyage from Bulgaria had disturbed, and any small tribulation he suffered in consequence used always to form the subject of his humorously plaintive laments. He always found,

sooner or later, some blank leaves torn out of a pocket-book, and, besides, some stump of a pencil with which to write his letters—letters destined in the sheets of the *Times* to move the hearts and souls of our people at home, and make them hang on his words; but, until he could lay his hand on some such writing materials, there was ineffable drollery in his way of asking some sympathy for "a poor devil of a *Times* correspondent without any pens, ink, or paper." By the natural play of a humour thus genial and taking, he thawed a great deal of reserve, and men talked to him with much more openness than they would have been likely to show if approached by a solemn inquirer in evident search of dry facts.

All that Mr. Russell saw and heard in the English camp was printed in the *Times*, and the English commander soon found that, with the representative of a free press in his camp, taking note of everything and printing everything, he had to deal with a fresh and novel force in the field, and that, too, a force which it was practically impossible either to check or control, except by appealing to its own sense of prudence.

Lord Raglan had not simply to reckon with the Russian army, or with the Russian army and the English Ministry at home. He had to reckon with men who, knowing nothing of war, took upon themselves to criticise his conduct of the campaign as if they knew everything, to publish sketches of his camp, to explain all his movements, to put in print all that was said or even whispered by his own subordinates;

and behind these he had to reckon with a public opinion which, taking its tone from the newspapers, reacted upon the men in his own camp. It was a new experience in war, a new experience to Lord Raglan and the head-quarters' staff, and it may have been a vexatious and painful experience; but the public at home, enraptured one day by the picture of a battle, by the march of the thin red line of the English army upon the slopes of Balaclava, found themselves a day or two after filled with rage at the thought of the sufferings of our troops, feeling, as they did, that these troops, fighting our battles as they were, ought to be as comfortably housed and provisioned in the Crimea as if they were in their own barracks in Birdcage Walk.

The *Standard* had a correspondent in the Crimea —Mr. Wood—whose letters were almost equal in picturesque power and pungency to those of Mr. Russell in the *Times*. But the *Times*, by virtue of its ascendancy, and by the boldness and independence with which it backed up its correspondent, carried everything before it, wielded the fierce democracy of England with Demosthenic power, made and unmade Ministries, controlled Cabinets, and upon all matters concerning the army and its leaders exercised far more power than the House of Commons or the House of Lords.

These were the golden days of the *Times*. The *Times* was king, the *Times* and its special correspondent; and the public believed far more in the men of Printing House Square—in their sagacity, in their

military capacity, and even in their patriotism—than it believed in the men of Whitehall.

The electric telegraph, the repeal of the paper duty, the publication of penny newspapers—each in turn did much to break down the power of the *Times;* and when, in the war of 1866, and still more in the war of 1870, the *Daily News*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Standard* sent skilful and powerful men into the field as their representatives (in some cases professional soldiers), the *Times* lost the proud position which it had held till then by a double right—by right of inheritance and by right of genius. The honours of the war of 1870 do not belong to the *Times.* They were monopolised by the *Daily News*, and monopolised by the *Daily News* because it possessed in Archibald Forbes a trained soldier wielding a graphic and powerful pen, and endowed with physical powers of the rarest kind.

The war correspondent is the last and, perhaps, the most extraordinary development of the Press. Journalists took their places by right in the galleries of legislative assemblies, by the side of the jury-box in courts of law, in the market-place, and in the public meeting. Their right to be present in all these places was soon recognised. But the Court and the camp seemed to be beyond the jurisdiction of the Press. Yet even here the representatives of the Press have found their way, and an army without its special correspondent to-day would hardly know itself.

What is the next conquest to be?

The war correspondent can hardly represent the

complete and final development of the Press. The *New York Herald*, in a recent lull, sent one of its special correspondents into the heart of Africa to find Dr. Livingstone, because at the moment the world happened to take an interest in Livingstone, and because the Royal Geographical Society had failed in its attempt to find him. Dr. Livingstone died without finishing the work that he had set himself to do, and the *New York Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph*, thinking the work interesting, sent out a special correspondent at a cost of £32,000, to clear up the mystery that the world was sighing over. The *Daily News*, still more recently, has sent one of its correspondents into the centre of Asia, to explore the paths of Russian conquest as far as Merv, and the correspondent, after a series of adventures which constitute a romance in themselves, has returned with his note-books full of sketches and information which, if interesting to the public, may be of the highest service to the Russian and English Governments. Tunis became interesting to us a few months ago, and instantly the *Standard* had a correspondent in the capital of the Regency and even in the palace of the Bey.

There can hardly be said to be a limit to enterprises of this kind, if there is no limit, as apparently there is none, to the resources of the Press. But the one condition of all newspaper enterprise is that the work shall be work that appeals to the imagination, to national sentiments, or to national pride. It must be something out of which "copy" can be made. A year or two ago, the world happened to be interested

for a time in an Indian famine, and instantly Mr. Forbes was on his way to Bengal with his note-book and pencil to describe the scene of the distress. Burmah was disturbed, and a correspondent was instantly despatched to Mandalay. Expense and distance are nothing, and most of the men who are sent upon these missions, knowing that their own credit and the credit of the journals which they represent are at stake, use the telegraph with a freedom which startles even Governments, paying £300, £400, £500, and even £800 for the transmission of a message, in order to anticipate consuls, ambassadors, and generals with their reports upon every matter of importance. It has frequently happened during the past three or four years that the public, with a special edition of a newspaper in its hands, is beforehand with the Ministers of the Crown.

It was said a few years ago that newspapers did not lead public opinion—that they were simply its expression; and the observation was true. But it is true no longer. The Press to-day is an independent power. It is independent of the Government in its intelligence. It is independent of Parliament in its criticism. It is independent of everything, except the public sentiment, and that it aspires to form and lead. Hardly a question is asked in Parliament that the newspapers have not anticipated; and before either Lords or Commons can criticise the answer, it is criticised with all the necessary sagacity and acumen by the Press.

Nor is this all; for the Press, sharing the authority

of Parliament during the session, exercises all its own privileges, and exercises, by proxy, the privileges of Parliament during the Recess. There is hardly a question of policy or a public measure of the slightest importance that is not now completely thrashed out in the Press long before it reaches Parliament; and when that is the case, all that Parliament can do is to give authoritative expression to views which, even in the form that they ultimately take—that of set speeches—are hardly distinguishable from the form in which they originally appeared in the Press—that of letters and leaders.

It is the business of the Newspaper Press to report everything—from a revolution to a horse-race, from an opera to an earthquake, from the suicide of a Sultan to the crowing of a cock in the backyard of a suburban villa: to have an opinion upon everything—a prompt, precise and clear opinion—and to express that opinion while other people are thinking about it. And the Press is equal to all its duties. All the public bodies in England sit in the newspapers to-day. Parliament sits in the newspapers; the courts of law sit in the newspapers; merchants, brokers, and bankers all transact their business like bees in a glass-house. Secrets are things of the past. Scandals which were formerly hardly whispered in private conversation are now published without the slightest attempt at concealment. Everything is known that used to be hidden, and everything that is known is proclaimed on the house-tops. The Society papers have their faults: they are often prurient and

sometimes scandalous; but in comparison with the *Satirist*, the *Age*, or even in comparison with the *Anti-Jacobin*, the *World*, *Truth*, *Life*, and the *Whitehall Review* are papers which may be read at the fireside without a blush. Perhaps the taste they cultivate is the taste of valets, and if no man is a hero to his valet we shall soon find ourselves bankrupt at once of generals, statesmen, and orators. But the English Press, even when least pure, is less impure in its tone and style than the American and French Press. It seldom —very seldom—sacrifices purity to piquancy; and that observation, if true of the Society papers, is equally true of the Comic part of the Press. There is no comic publication in Europe that can be spoken of in the same sentence as *Punch*. It is racy, frank, and personal to a degree that often perplexes foreigners, imbued with their ideas of the respect due to constituted authority. But compare *Punch* with any rival publication in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, or Florence. The humour of these Paris and Berlin publications may sometimes be richer; but the humour of *Punch* and its contemporaries, like that of Sheridan,

"Ne'er carries a heart-stain away on its blade."

This is something to congratulate ourselves upon, all the more heartily because everywhere the tone of the Comic Press is the best index to the public taste and public temper.

The English Press is one of the most characteristic of English institutions; it is one of its most creditable, one of its purest, one of its noblest. It is the